

Form 1B.1
Self-Reported Annual Disclosures
Of ChildFund India
with BSE SSE Registration No: NA
with NSE SSE Registration No: NSESENPO00144 (w.e.f. 28-Jul-2025)
for the period from 01-Apr-2025 to 31-Mar-2026

1) Disclosures on General aspects

1a) Details of top programmes

List of Top 5 activities/ interventions/ programs/ project (budget wise) in the financial year

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
Must Reply	Must Reply

#	Programme Name	Year Started	Programme Duration (in years)	Geography	Total Programme Budget (in INR)	Expenditure in Previous year (in INR)	Cumulative Expenditure (in INR)	Total Reach (Direct, Indirect, Institutional) beneficiaries	Names of Donors or Investors	SDG Goal	Alignment with National/State schemes or priority
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sr. No.	Name by which the programme is referred to by your organisation.		Number of Years the programme is expected to run from its launch. If the programme go on forever, please mention ongoing	List the States with Districts covered by the programme. Mention how many of these cover aspirational blocks as per NITI Aayog.	Total Programme Cost across its life. In case of ongoing programme, at least 5 years	Expenditure in the Previous Financial Year under review	Expenditure from the programme start till the end of the Financial Year under review/ Total expenditure for at least last 5 Financial Year (if it is ongoing programme)	Direct-beneficiaries directly impacted like students of school; Indirect-beneficiaries indirectly impacted like families of students; Institutional-entities impacted like other schools in the area	Provide Donor's name (Top 5 Donors of the programme since the programme inception)	Select 1 SDG Goal that is most impacted by the programme	List the schemes or national goals to which programme is aligned, if any
1	Child Support and Community Support Programme (Relief of the Poor) Covering	Before FY 2021-22	Ongoing	Maharashtra (Mumbai, Pune), Odisha (Kendrapara), Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh		28,48,42,030	110,56,95,996 (FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26)	Direct: 33,906 Indirect: 1,35,627	ChildFund International USA	SDG 1	National scholarship scheme

#	Programme Name	Year Started	Programme Duration (in years)	Geography	Total Programme Budget (in INR)	Expenditure in Previous year (in INR)	Cumulative Expenditure (in INR)	Total Reach (Direct, Indirect, Institutional) beneficiaries	Names of Donors or Investors	SDG Goal	Alignment with National/State schemes or priority
	programs like STEM, PENCIL, UDAAN			(Anandpur), Karnataka (Bengaluru, Raichur), Delhi							
2	National AIDS Control Programme – Andhra Pradesh (APSACS 2-0465D, earlier 2-0444D / 2-0267D) (Preventive Healthcare)	Before FY 2020-21	Ongoing (annual contracts)	Andhra Pradesh <i>[All 28 districts with 15 aspirational blocks]</i>		4,16,73,780	19,24,43,468 (FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26)	Direct: 6,10,343 Indirect: 19,85,509	Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS)	SDG 3	National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NACP)
3	Olam / ofi-supported programme (Relief of the Poor) Tackling the root causes of child labour in India spices supply chains	FY 2024-25	2 years	Bhadrachalam In Telangana and Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan	4,27,76,562	1,84,88,204	2,65,40,605 (FY 2024-25 to FY 2025-26)	Direct: 17,321 Indirect: 69,286	Olam Europe B.V. (ofi), Amsterdam, Netherlands	SDG 16, SDG 8	
4	Protective, Effective 'N' Context	FY 2022-23	3 years	Kota and Baran	1,16,68,694	1,14,76,874 (PENCIL Phase IV)	2,65,35,450 (FY 2022-23)	Direct: 19,437 Indirect: 77,748	K K Birla Memorial Society	SDG 4	

#	Programme Name	Year Started	Programme Duration (in years)	Geography	Total Programme Budget (in INR)	Expenditure in Previous year (in INR)	Cumulative Expenditure (in INR)	Total Reach (Direct, Indirect, Institutional) beneficiaries	Names of Donors or Investors	SDG Goal	Alignment with National/State schemes or priority
	based Initiation of Learning (PENCIL) Phase IV in FY 2025-26					1,05,96,780 + 99-0443D 8,80,094)	to FY 2025-26)				
5	Web Safe and Wise (OSEAC)	FY 2025-26	1 year	Pune	97,00,000	97,00,000	97,00,000 (FY 2025-26)	Direct: 1,42,574 Indirect: 28,514	Bajaj Allianz	SDG 16	

Top 5 identified based on FY 2025-26 expenditure (Schedule 4, audited accounts). Cumulative expenditure from audited accounts FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26: for FY 2021-22 to FY 2023-24, expenditure under the programme heads in the audited schedules (Child Support + Community Support Programme – foreign funds; NACP Andhra Pradesh / APSACS; PENCIL – KKBMS); for FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26, donor-wise utilization in Schedule 4.

Beneficiaries includes entities such as individual, person, thing, article, unit, body, creature

1b) Details of Scale of operations (Including Employee and Volunteer strength)

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

Sr. Number	Item	Details
1	Scale of Operations The scale of the operations shall be explained by:	
1.1	net turn-over/annual budget/annual spending in last 3 years	Annual spending (total expenditure as per audited Income & Expenditure Account): FY 2025-26: Rs 40,22,67,334 (total income Rs 40,26,36,600) FY 2024-25: Rs 34,72,26,170 (total income Rs 36,16,36,222) FY 2023-24: Rs 37,80,53,062 (total income Rs 36,26,79,814)
1.2	number of beneficiaries	6.5 million (populations) in FY 2025-26
1.3	number of locations of operations	Regional / field offices: Bangalore, Raichur, Anantapur, Junnar, Mumbai, Delhi, Sultanpur, Khunti, Kendrapara, Udaipur, Vijayawada
1.4	whether at national/ state level/ district level	National level – multi-State operations
2	Number of Employees Total number of employees shall be disclosed separately as	
2.1	permanent employees	None
2.2	temporary employees and	543 Consultants (Full time and Part time)
2.3	employees on contract	152 Fixed-term contract staff (Grants – 20)
3	Number of Volunteers The nature and scale of activities performed by volunteers shall be disclosed.	

1c) Details of top donors or investors of the organisation

List of Top 5 donors or investors (budget wise)

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

#	Donor or Investor Name	Geography	Total Programme Cost (in INR)	Expenditure in the Previous Year (in INR)	Cumulative Expenditure (in INR)	Total Outreach (to Beneficiaries)	SDG Goal	Alignment with National / State schemes or priority
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Sr . No</i>	<i>Provide Donor's name</i>	<i>List the States with Districts covered by the programme. Mention how many of these cover aspirational blocks as per NITI Aayog</i>	<i>Total Programme Budget supported/ sanctioned by the donor during the life of the project</i>	<i>Expenditure in the Previous Financial Year under review against this Donor's funding</i>	<i>Expenditure against this Donor's funding from the programme inception till the end of the Previous Financial Year under review. If it is an ongoing funding from this donor, then at least for the last 5 Financial Years</i>	<i>Direct-beneficiaries directly impacted like students of school; Indirect-beneficiaries indirectly impacted like families of students; Institutional-entities impacted like other schools in the area</i>	<i>Select 1 SDG Goal that is most impacted by the programme</i>	<i>List the schemes or national goals to which programme is aligned, if any</i>
1	ChildFund International USA and its alliances (foreign contribution)	Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Rajasthan		28,48,42,030	1,10,56,95,996 (FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26)	1,69,534	SDG 1	National scholarship scheme, NIPUN Bharat Mission
2	Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS)	Andhra Pradesh - Anantapur, Chittoor East Godavari, Guntur, Kadapa (YSR),		4,16,73,780	19,24,43,468 (FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26)	25,95,852	SDG 3	National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NACP)

#	Donor or Investor Name	Geography	Total Programme Cost (in INR)	Expenditure in the Previous Year (in INR)	Cumulative Expenditure (in INR)	Total Outreach (to Beneficiaries)	SDG Goal	Alignment with National / State schemes or priority
		Krishna, Kurnool, Nellore ,Prakasam, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, West Godavari						
3	Olam / ofi-supported programme (Relief of the Poor) Tackling the root causes of child labour in India spices supply chains (foreign contribution)	Bhadrachalam In Telangana and Jaisalmer and Barmer in Rajasthan	4,27,76,562	1,84,88,204	2,65,40,605 (FY 2024-25 to FY 2025-26)	87,608	SDG 16, SDG 8	NIPUN Bharat Mission ; National Skill Development Mission (NSDM) ; Mission Vatsalya
4	K K Birla Memorial Society (PENCIL)	Kota and Baran	1,16,68,694	1,14,76,874	2,65,35,450 (FY 2022-23 to FY 2025-26)	97186	SDG 4	NIPUN Bharat Mission; National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 ; Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) ; Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN); National Skill Development Mission (NSDM)
5	Bajaj Allianz (Web Safe India)	Pune	97,00,000	97,00,000	97,00,000 (FY 2025-26)	142574	SDG 16	Mission Vatsalya

2) Disclosures on Governance aspects

2a) Reporting of related party transactions as per Income Tax Act section 13(3)

The organization shall disclose all related party transactions entered by it and reasons for the same.

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must comply</i>	<i>Must comply</i>

Name of the Party	Nature of relationship	Nature of transaction	Amount in current year	Amount in previous year	Balance Outstanding Current Year (Dr / Cr)	Balance Outstanding Previous Year (Dr / Cr)
Anand Kumar Vishwakarma	Executive Director (from 01-Jul-2025) and Ex-Officio member of Governing Council (from 22-Aug-2025) – person referred to in section 13(3)	Salary / remuneration as Executive Director	Rs – 50,62,500/-FY 2025-26 payroll	NIL (not in employment in FY 2024-25)	Nil	NIL

Remuneration to the Executive Director is paid for employment as chief executive (part-time from 01-Jul-2025, full-time from 01-Jan-2026) at the approved salary structure.

Definition of Related Party

If there have been transactions between related parties, during the existence of a related party relationship, the reporting enterprise to disclose the following:

- (i) the name of the transacting related party;
- (ii) a description of the relationship between the parties;
- (iii) a description of the nature of transactions;
- (iv) volume of the transactions either as an amount or as an appropriate proportion;
- (v) any other elements of the related party transactions necessary for an understanding of the financial statements;
- (vi) the amounts or appropriate proportions of outstanding items pertaining to related parties at the balance sheet date and provisions for doubtful debts due from such parties at that date; and
- (vii) amounts written off or written back in the period in respect of debts due to or to related parties.

2b) Compliance management process

Statement of compliance from senior decision maker (Chair/ CEO or equivalent) in Form 1B.4

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must have</i>	<i>Must have</i>

ChildFund India follows a compliance calendar maintained by the Finance & Compliance function covering Income Tax (12AB, 80G, Form 10B/ITR, TDS), FCRA (FC-4, utilisation, administrative expense limit, change intimations), GST, Registrar of Societies, NGO Darpan, CSR-1 and NSE Social Stock Exchange filings. Status is reviewed

monthly by the Director – Finance & Accounting, reported to the Executive Director and Senior Management Team, and placed before the Governing Council at its meetings. Accounts are audited annually by the statutory auditor (SPRM & CO LLP for FY 2025-26). The Executive Director's Statement of Compliance is given in Form 1B.4.

3) Disclosures on Financial aspects

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

Please attach the following documents:

Item	NA	Yes	No
1. Balance Sheet Audited Balance Sheet as at 31-Mar-2026		✓	
2. Income & Expenditure Statement Audited Income & Expenditure Account for FY 2025-26		✓	
3. Cash Flow Statement/ Receipts & Payments Account Not prepared – not required under the revised Income Tax audit report format; audited set comprises Balance Sheet, Income & Expenditure Account and Schedules	✓		
4. Schedules to Accounts Schedules 3 to 11		✓	
5. Notes on Accounts & Significant Accounting Policies Schedules 1 and 2 (About the entity, Significant accounting policies and notes)		✓	
6. Program-wise fund utilization for the previous year Programme-head-wise expenditure from Income & Expenditure Account and donor-wise utilisation from Schedule 4		✓	
7. Details of Auditors SPRM & CO LLP, Chartered Accountants, FRN E300278; Partner: CA Mohan Manikantam M., M. No. 314216; Cuttack. Auditors since FY 2023-24 (earlier S. Sahoo & Co., FRN 322952E); reappointed for FY 2026-27 on 22-Aug-2026		✓	
8. Copy of Income Tax Return ITR-7 for AY 2025-26 (FY 2024-25) filed u/s 139(1) on 28-Oct-2025, Ack. No. 301987570281025. ITR for AY 2026-27 due 31-Oct-2026 – to be submitted once filed		✓	
9. Copy of Form10B/ 10BB Audit report filed with Income Tax			

Item	NA	Yes	No
<i>[Form 10B for AY 2026-27 – due 30-Sep-2026; attach once filed with UDIN]</i>			
10. Copy of FC Return (if NPO has FCRA) FC-4 for FY 2024-25 submitted on 28-Dec-2025. FC-4 for FY 2025-26 (new format) due 31-Dec-2026 – to be submitted once filed.		✓	
11. Copy of Annual Returns filed with Registration Authority (Registrar of Companies, Registrar of Societies, Charity Commissioner) (In the finalization stage)			✓

SSE may specify additional parameters that may be required to be disclosed by NPO on an annual basis.

Form 1B.2

This section covers the Annual Impact Report (AIR) that should, at a minimum, cover the aspects described below.

This should cover at least the top 67 percent of programme spending for the reporting period. For each of the thematic areas the organisation works in, as per the SEBI defined 16 thematic areas, a separate AIR is to be prepared in Form 1B.2. This would help the organisation to determine eligibility for listing projects.

If the organisation has active listed securities in the same period, they should be covered using Form 2 that needs to be assessed by a competent social impact assessor or an empanelled social impact assessment firm, for each of the listed securities.

1B.2(i) List of Programmes funded through Listed Securities on SSE for which Form 2.1 is applicable

Serial No.	Listing ID	Programme/ Project Title	Total Spending in INR on this Programme in this FY	% spending on this Programme/ Project in the FY under review	Form 2.1 Prepared (Yes/ No)
–	NA	Not applicable – no securities listed on SSE during FY 2025-26	NA	NA	NA

1B.2(ii) List of Programmes for which AIR is prepared in this section

Serial No.	Programme/ Project Title	Total Spending in INR on this Programme in this FY	% spending on this Programme/ Project in the financial year under review	Page Nos in this report
1	Relief of the Poor programmes	23,52,59,427	75.49%	
2	Preventive Healthcare programmes	4,94,19,819	15.86%	
3	Education programmes	2,22,93,809	7.15%	
4	Livelihood programmes	46,81,434	1.50%	
	Total programme expenditure FY 2025-26	31,16,54,489	100.00%	

Programme expenditure = programme personnel costs + programmatic implementation expenditure (audited I&E FY 2025-26). Excluding fundraising and administrative costs Rs 8,88,49,998 and non-recurring (capital) expenditure Rs 17,62,847; total expenditure Rs 40,22,67,334. Relief of the Poor programmes alone cover 75.49%, which meets the 67% requirement if AIRs are prepared for them.

Please note: Total of 1B.2(i) and 1B.2(ii) should be at least the top 67 percent of programme spending for the reporting period.

Sub-Section 1B.2.1 Annual Impact Report (AIR) Self-Reported
of ChildFund India for the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026
For “Relief of the Poor Programming” comprising 67% spending in the financial year under review
Under SSE Education Theme

Programme start date: 1st April 2025

Programme Objective(s):

1) Strategic Intent and Planning		
Item	S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
a) What is the social or environmental or cultural challenge the organization is addressing in this thematic area? Has this changed in the last year?	<i>Must Reply</i>	Under “Relief of the Poor” programmes supported by ChildFund International, ChildFund India is addressing interconnected vulnerabilities affecting children, adolescents, women, families and communities. The identified challenges include poverty, child labour, school dropout, migration, early marriage, inadequate livelihood opportunities, malnutrition, adolescent health and protection risks, online digital safety concerns, gender and social exclusion, and climate-related risks. For this report, we have referred the ChildFund India's top 3 flagship programs; 1. STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics education program 2. PENCIL: Protective, Effective and Context Based Initiation of Learning Program 3. OSEAC: Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children) <u>STEM: (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education program</u> Under the educational portfolio, ChildFund India's STEM Programme addresses the challenge of limited opportunities for children to learn Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through practical, experiential and application-oriented approaches. Traditional classroom-based teaching may provide limited opportunities for children to experiment, explore concepts practically and connect classroom learning with real-life applications. The programme therefore aims to strengthen children's exposure to practical STEM learning and support teachers in adopting more hands-on and experiential teaching methodologies.

		The programme also recognizes that sustainable STEM education requires strengthening the capacity of teachers and embedding practical STEM sessions within the regular school learning process, rather than limiting STEM activities to occasional or stand-alone events. In this thematic area (Learning / Quality Education & STEM), ChildFund India addresses a combination of structural, social, and cultural barriers, primarily in educationally backward and rural districts. 1. Educational & Infrastructural Deficits (Social/Educational) • High Dropout Rates & Learning Deficits: Rural government schools in educationally backward regions suffer from high student dropout rates, persistent learning gaps, and systemic reliance on traditional rote-learning methods. • Lack of Modern Educational Infrastructure: Schools lack digital tools, mini science centers, interactive models, and well-equipped labs, preventing rural students from engaging in experiential, activity-based learning. 2. Socio-Cultural & Gender Barriers (Cultural/Social) • Gender Disparities in STEM: Traditional gender norms in rural communities often limit female participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Girls frequently experience lower encouragement and restricted career exposure compared to boys. • Low Academic Aspirations: Limited exposure to modern technology and role models suppresses career ambitions, leading rural children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds—to drop out early or forgo higher education <u>PENCIL PROGRAM</u> In Kota and Baran districts of Rajasthan, many children from poor rural and tribal families attend school but are not learning basic reading, writing and math at the level expected for their age. Part of the cause is how families see the early years. Anganwadi Centers are commonly seen as "khichdi centers" for meals rather than places of learning, so many children miss early education or enter Grade 1 before they are ready. Anganwadi Workers have heavy health and nutrition duties and little time or training to focus on early learning. At home, poverty and low parental literacy limit support for learning, and play is often not valued as a way children learn. As children fall behind, they lose confidence and interest and attend less regularly. Boys are drawn into work and girls into caregiving, which leads to early dropout. Children's emotional wellbeing is also largely overlooked, at home and in school.
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Has this changed in the last year?

The core challenge remains the same. Over the year it has become clearer how children's emotional wellbeing and home environment shape their learning. Families are slowly beginning to see Anganwadi Centers and schools as places of learning, but this shift is still in its early stages.

OSEAC PROGRAM

In the ChildFund India and its flagship initiative #WebSafeAndWise, the organization specifically addresses Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC).

Key Social, Environmental, and Cultural Challenges**Social & Structural Challenges**

- **Explosive Growth:** Rapid expansion of mobile internet access and affordable smartphones across semi-urban and rural India has outpaced safety infrastructure. Children frequently encounter sexual solicitation, grooming, and CSAM (Child Sexual Abuse Material) via social media, online gaming platforms (e.g., *Roblox*, *Free Fire*), and encrypted apps.
- **Institutional & Enforcement Gaps:** Despite laws like the POCSO Act (which logged over 21,500 online child abuse cases in a single year), child protection mechanisms, police, and local law enforcement often lack standardized digital forensic tools or capacity to address online crimes swiftly.

Environmental / Contextual Challenges

- **Post-Pandemic Digital Exposure:** The sudden digitization of education accelerated during COVID-19 resulted in an over 100% surge in reports of online child exploitation in India. Unsupervised screen time remains high across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **Emergence of Unregulated Digital Spaces:** Platform design features—such as live-streaming, end-to-end encryption, and in-game chat features—allow perpetrators to conceal identity and approach young victims undetected.

Cultural Challenges

- **Severe Digital Literacy Gap:** Parents, caregivers, and community members often lack basic digital literacy, making them unaware of online grooming tactics, financial sextortion, or early behavioral warning signs in children.
- **Stigma and Silence:** Cultural taboo around sexual abuse and fear of victim-blaming prevent children and families from reporting incidents to law enforcement or seeking psychological help.

		Has This Changed in the Last Year? Yes. The risk landscape and ChildFund India's programmatic focus have shifted significantly due to modern technology and institutional partnerships: 1. Surge in Generative AI Threats: The rise of AI tools, "nudifying" apps, and deepfakes has introduced a wave of non-consensual AI-generated material targeting children. Globally and in regional monitoring, AI-involved child abuse reports spiked by over 1,300%. 2. Rise in Financial Sextortion Targeting Younger Kids: Perpetrators have increasingly shifted toward financial extortion schemes, with targeted demographics dropping to primary school-aged children (7–10 years). 3. Scale-up through Multi-State Government Partnerships: Over the past year, ChildFund India scaled its #WebSafeAndWise intervention from localized efforts to multi-state systemic partnerships—notably collaborating directly with state bodies like the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR), Maharashtra Police, and various government departments in Odisha. They now focus heavily on deploying localized training manuals and multilingual awareness toolkits.
b) How is the organization attending to the challenge or planning to attend to the challenge in this thematic area? Has this changed in the last year?	<i>Must Reply</i>	<u>STEM PROGRAM</u> To address the educational deficits, rote-learning reliance, and gender barriers in rural education, ChildFund India employs an integrated, community-rooted approach. The intervention is managed through the following mechanisms: How the Organization is Attending to the Challenge • Experiential & Tech-Enabled Infrastructure: Rather than relying on traditional textbooks, ChildFund equips government schools with Mini Science Centers, science kits, smart classrooms, and digital content (videos and simulations) to facilitate hands-on learning. • Teacher Capacity Building: The organization provides specialized training that empowers educators to shift from passive rote-learning instruction to activity-based, inquiry-led teaching methods. • Targeted Gender Inclusion & Remedial Support: The program deliberately targets female students through inclusive classroom dynamics and encouragement to build their

		confidence in traditionally male-dominated STEM fields. It also specifically utilizes physical science models to help weaker students grasp complex concepts more easily. - Community & Institutional Engagement: ChildFund works directly with School Management Committees (SMCs), School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs), and parents to build a supportive home and community environment for students <i>Has this changed in the last year?</i> The key measurable changes were observed across students, teachers, and school infrastructure: - Significant Learning Outcomes & Academic Performance - Higher Academic Achievement: Students in intervention schools scored 2 to 3 points higher in STEM learning assessments compared to non-intervention peers, with the gap most pronounced in lower grades (Classes 6 and 7). - Impact of Digital Content: Digital learning materials (videos, simulations) emerged as the single highest contributor to correct learning outcomes, scoring 6.5 out of 10 in activity contribution. - Boost in Student Confidence & Subject Interest - Interest in STEM: 91% of students reported finding STEM subjects more interesting due to smart boards, lab infrastructure, and science kits (up from low baseline interest). - Confidence Levels: Over 91% of students reported increased confidence in Science and Mathematics, with weaker students making marked improvements through hands-on, activity-based learning. - Increased Curiosity: 85% of students expressed heightened curiosity and excitement during learning sessions. - Shift in Gender Engagement & Future Aspirations - Female Participation: Girls displayed significantly higher participation and confidence in classroom activities, supported by encouragement from teachers and parents. - Career Aspirations: 91.2% of students stated that the program directly influenced their interest in pursuing future STEM careers. - Instructional Practices & Resource Utilization - Practical Teaching Adoption: 81.8% of students reported that their teachers shifted from traditional rote learning to practical, hands-on teaching methods. - Resource Maintenance: 87.4% of students confirmed that STEM resources and smart classrooms were consistently functional and well-maintained. - Efficiency of Time: 94.7% of students felt time spent on STEM activities was well-utilized and directly improved their core academic performance.
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5. Institutional Ownership & Sustainability

- Teacher Independence: 93.7% of students affirmed that school staff were committed to sustaining activities, with trained teachers independently conducting sessions using STEM kits without external aid.
- Local School Governance: School Management Committees (SMCs) and School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) began taking local ownership, planning science exhibitions, and allocating budgets for lab maintenance.

PENCIL PROGRAM

Through the PENCIL programme, ChildFund India works in 44 government schools and 44 Anganwadi Centers across Kota and Baran districts, reaching over 4,000 children aged 3 to 14. Youth from the local community work as education facilitators. They run regular play-based learning sessions at Anganwadi Centers to build school readiness, and foundational literacy and numeracy classes in schools. Children are taught at their learning level through activity-based and multi-grade, multi-level methods, storytelling and teaching-learning materials. Anganwadi Workers and government teachers are trained in these methods so that the practice continues within the system. Weekly social and emotional learning sessions help children build confidence, manage their feelings and relate well to others. School libraries, children's fairs and celebrations of important days make learning enjoyable. Parents and communities are engaged through regular meetings, awareness drives and SEL sessions, so that learning is supported at home.

Has this changed in the last year?

Yes. The overall approach remains the same, but this year we placed greater focus on children's emotional wellbeing and on the quality of teaching. We introduced UNESCO's SEL package for Anganwadi Workers and parents. Facilitator training moved to storytelling as a teaching tool, and Anganwadi facilitators were trained in Child Fund's play-based learning package. We also increased our work with parents, so that families play a more active role in their children's learning.

OSEAC PROGRAM

How the Organization is Attending to the Challenge

1. Systemic Integration with State Governments

ChildFund India scales its interventions by partnering directly with state bodies to embed digital safety into institutional frameworks:

- **State Coalitions:** Partners with state protection commissions, including the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR), Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (OSPCR), and state police departments
- **Institutional Training Manuals:** Collaborates with state departments of education and women/child development to distribute standardized safety training manuals and toolkits for educators and child welfare workers

2. Community Education & Localization

To bridge the digital literacy gap among parents and rural communities, the organization produces localized educational content:

- **Multilingual Multimedia Resources:** Operates video, audio, and print awareness toolkits across regional languages—including Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, and Odia—to educate children and caregivers on grooming, cyberbullying, and reporting channels.
- **Parental Guidance Initiatives:** Provides structured guidance for parents to foster non-judgmental environments, manage screen usage, and detect early warning signs of digital abuse or sextortion.

Has This Changed in the Last Year?

Yes. Over the past year, ChildFund India's strategic approach has evolved in response to shifting digital threats and campaign progression:

1. **Focus on Emerging Tech Threats (AI & Deepfakes):** Program messaging and awareness modules have adapted to address risks from generative AI, "nudifying" apps, and deepfakes alongside traditional cyberbullying or CSAM threats.
2. **Transition from Regional Pilots to Multi-State Scale:** Interventions shifted from localized pilot programs into multi-agency state frameworks. The initiative expanded inter-

		departmental partnerships across education, health, and law enforcement sectors in states like Odisha and Maharashtra.
c) Who or what is being impacted (target segment/ affected area)? Has this changed in the last year?	<i>Must Reply</i>	STEM PROGRAM Primary Target Segment: Students in grades 6 through 10 in government rural schools, with a specific focus on female students and children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Secondary Beneficiaries: ○ School Educators & Principals: Received capacity building, activity-based training, and modern digital/lab resources to move away from rote learning methods. ○ Local Governance Bodies: School Management Committees (SMCs), School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs), and parents who engage in institutional planning and community support. • Geographic Focus / Affected Area: Rural and educationally backward districts, specifically Raichur district in Karnataka. Has This Target Segment / Scope Changed in the Last Year? Yes, key shifts have taken place over the past year: 1. Shift from General Students to Gender-Focused and Remedial Targeting • Elevated Inclusion of Girls: Program execution shifted toward systematically encouraging female participation in STEM, leading to higher confidence and active classroom involvement among girls. • Remedial Support for Weaker Students: The focus shifted from uniform classroom delivery to targeted, hands-on activity learning for weaker-performing students, resulting in notable academic gains in lower grades (Classes 6 and 7). 2. Evolution of Beneficiary Roles (From Recipients to Independent Drivers) • Teacher Independence: School educators moved from passive trainees to independent session leaders who conduct STEM modules using physical models and smart classrooms without external staff assistance. • Local Community Ownership: SDMCs and SMCs evolved from passive observers into active stakeholders allocating local budgets for lab upkeep and organizing school science exhibitions.

Has this changed in the last year?

The core target population has not fundamentally changed, but the scope of engagement has broadened. The stronger movement from reaching individual beneficiaries to strengthening the family, community and institutional systems around them.

This is consistent with the organization's FY 2025–26 integrated programming framework, which emphasizes household and community resilience, systems strengthening, age- and need-based intervention, and equity and inclusion.

PENCIL PROGRAM

The programme reaches over 4,000 children aged 3 to 14 from poor rural and tribal families in Kota and Baran districts of Rajasthan. This includes more than 1,300 preschool children aged 3 to 6 in 44 Anganwadi Centers and more than 2,700 children aged 6 to 14 in 44 government schools.

Beyond the children, the programme also works with the adults around them:

- 44 government school teachers and 44 Anganwadi Workers, trained in play-based learning, foundational literacy and numeracy, and SEL every year.
- 66 youth from the local community, who work as education facilitators
- Around 2,500 parents, engaged through SEL sessions and community meetings
- The wider community in the project villages, reached through awareness drives, libraries and events

Has this changed in the last year?

No. The target group and area stayed the same as in the earlier phase: the same 44 schools and 44 Anganwadi Centers in Kota and Baran. What changed is how deeply we work with parents and Anganwadi Workers. Both now take part in SEL, so the programme works with the child's whole environment and not only the classroom.

OSEAC PROGRAM

The State Child Rights Commissions (KSCPCR in Karnataka, MSCPCR in Maharashtra, OSCPCR in Odisha), police personnel, educators, and frontline Child Welfare Committee (CWC) workers receiving specialized training on reporting OSEAC and handling digital safety protocols.

		Has this changed in the last year? Rather than focusing solely on direct grass-roots community clusters, the target reach expanded into statewide government school systems and state police networks. Partnerships with state commissions allowed ChildFund India to impact whole school systems across entire districts rather than isolated community hubs.
d) What will be the outcomes of the activities, intervention, programs or project? Disclosure should include positive and potential unintended negative outcomes.	<i>Must Reply</i>	STEM PROGRAM 1. Positive Outcomes - Enhanced Learning & Academic Performance: Significant score improvements (e.g., intervention students scoring 2–3 points higher in core concepts) driven by activity-based tools and digital simulations. - Increased Confidence & Subject Interest: Over 91% of participants gained confidence in Science and Mathematics, with 85% reporting increased curiosity. - Shift in Future Career Aspirations: Exposure to smart classrooms and interactive labs encourages over 91% of students to express an interest in pursuing STEM higher education or careers. - Gender Empowerment & Inclusivity: Higher confidence and active classroom participation among girls, supported by encouragement from teachers and parents. - Institutional Capacity & Local Ownership: Teachers shift from rote methods to independent facilitation, while local bodies (SDMCs/SMCs) actively budget for resource maintenance. 2. Potential Unintended Negative Outcomes & Risks - Disparity Between Intervention and Non-Intervention Schools: Providing high-tech smart boards and mini science centers to select schools can temporarily widen the equity and achievement gap between beneficiary and neighboring non-intervention schools. PENCIL PROGRAM Positive outcomes School readiness: Preschool children in the 44 Anganwadi Centers build the early language, number, motor and social skills they need, so they are ready for Grade 1. Foundational learning: More children in Grades 1 to 5 reach age-appropriate reading, writing and math levels, and older children who had fallen behind catch up. Social and emotional wellbeing: Children become more confident, manage their feelings better, get along with others and feel safe in the classroom.

- **Regular attendance:** Engaging, play-based classes keep children interested and coming to school, which lowers the risk of dropout.
- **Stronger teaching practice:** Teachers and Anganwadi Workers adopt play-based, activity-based and level-appropriate methods and use them in their own classrooms.
- **Support at home:** Parents understand the value of early learning and play, take a more active role in their child's education, and see Anganwadi Centres as places of learning.
- **Reading culture:** School libraries and community events encourage children and parents to read and learn together.
- **Local youth:** Youth from the community who serve as facilitators gain skills, income and recognition as role models.

Potential unintended negative outcomes, and how we manage them

- **Reliance on facilitators:** Teachers and Anganwadi Workers may leave learning support to the facilitators and step back themselves. We manage this by training them directly and involving them in sessions, so the practice stays with the system.
- **Labelling of children:** Grouping children by learning level can make those in lower groups feel singled out. Groups are kept flexible, assessments are low-pressure, and children move up as they progress.
- **Extra workload:** Trainings and meetings add to the load of Anganwadi Workers who already carry health and nutrition duties. Sessions are planned around their schedules and linked to their existing work.

Burden on parents: Daily wage families may find it hard to attend meetings. Sessions are kept short and held at times that suit them

OSEAC PROGRAM

Positive Outcomes

- **Enhanced Institutional Protection & Policy Enforcement:** Formalized state partnerships, such as collaborations with the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) and police departments in Maharashtra and Odisha, lead to localized training manuals and strengthened official reporting channels under the POCSO Act.

2) Approach		
Item	S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
a) What is the baseline status* at the start of the activity/intervention/programs or project and at the end of the last reporting period? <i>*Baseline status includes situation analysis/ context description at the start</i> <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> Under one of the Flag ships of Relief to poor- the STEM Project is one of the most appropriate programs to be scale it up, during FY 26, the evaluation has been conducted; The baseline programme situation was characterized by: • Limited access to STEM infrastructure, laboratories, digital content and teaching aids in schools. • Limited opportunities for students to experience hands-on and experiential STEM learning. • Teachers have fewer resources and opportunities to apply practical STEM teaching methodologies. • Greater reliance on conventional/rote learning approaches in schools without STEM support. • Limited opportunities for students to develop practical understanding, confidence and interest in STEM subjects. • A particular need to strengthen STEM exposure and learning opportunities for girls and students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The comparison with non-intervention schools also provides evidence of the prevailing situation: teachers in non-intervention schools reported challenges in adopting activity-based learning because of the absence of digital content, teaching aids and hands-on materials. Status at the end of the last reporting period By the end of the period, the STEM intervention had established a stronger environment for practical and experiential STEM learning in intervention schools. Key status indicators included: • 79.3% of intervention students reported frequent integration of STEM activities into regular classes. • 87% reported that teachers regularly encouraged the use of STEM resources such as laboratories and digital boards. • 81.8% reported greater use of practical teaching methods. • 90.5% reported that they felt more confident in Science and Mathematics after the STEM programme. • 87.4% reported that STEM resources were consistently functional and well maintained.	Must Reply	Must Reply

- **94.7%** felt that the time spent on STEM activities was useful and contributed positively to their studies.
- **91.2%** reported increased interest in pursuing STEM-related careers.
- **93.7%** reported that teachers and school staff were committed to continuing STEM activities.
- **93.3%** of students expressed a desire for the STEM programme to continue.
- Students in intervention schools demonstrated higher STEM learning outcomes than students in non-intervention schools across grades 6–10, with particularly noticeable differences in Classes 6 and 7.

Overall, the programme moved from a situation of limited STEM infrastructure and practical learning opportunities towards a more structured, resource-supported and school-integrated STEM learning environment. The evaluation also indicates emerging institutional ownership, with teachers independently conducting STEM sessions and School Management Committees planning continued science exhibitions and laboratory activities.

PENCIL PROGRAM

At the start of the programme:

In Kota and Baran districts, children in the project schools and Anganwadi Centers came mostly from poor rural and tribal families with low parental literacy. Anganwadi Centers were seen mainly as places to get a meal, and teaching in schools was largely traditional and did not match children's learning levels. Parents took little part in their children's learning, and children's emotional wellbeing received little attention.

An ASER-based assessment of 1,314 children in Grades 3 to 5 confirmed large learning gaps:

- Only 16% of children could read a Grade 2 level text, and just 10% could read a story and answer questions about it. About 17% could not recognize letters.
- Only 21% could do subtraction or higher math, and about 12% could not recognize numbers from 1 to 9.
- Gaps were widest in Grade 3. Only 4% of Grade 3 children could read a Grade 2 text and only 5% could subtract.

At the end of the last reporting period

The follow-up assessment of the same 1,314 children showed strong progress.

Indicator (Grades 3 to 5)	Start	End
Children reading at Grade 2 level or above	16%	53%
Children able to answer questions on a story	10%	41%
Children at beginner level in reading	17%	2%
Children able to do subtraction or higher	21%	57%
Children at beginner level in math	12%	1%

Grade	Reading at Grade 2 level or above	Subtraction or higher
Grade 3	4% to 29%	5% to 31%
Grade 4	14% to 53%	18% to 57%
Grade 5	25% to 67%	32% to 73%

Reading improved faster than math. Grade 5 made the strongest gains, and 86% of Grade 5 children could answer questions on a story by the end. Grade 3 math, especially division and word problems, still needs more focused support.

OSEAC PROGRAM

1. Baseline Status (At Start of Intervention)

Situation Analysis & Context Description

- **Post-Pandemic Exploitation Spike:** The initiative launched amidst a 106% increase in reports of suspected child sexual exploitation in India (as reported to NCMEC's CyberTipline during the pandemic) driven by rapid digitization of education and unsupervised device access.
- **High Prevalence of Cyberbullying & Abuse:** Baseline indicators noted that 22% of Indian children had experienced cyberbullying (McAfee, 2022), and over 21,500 cases related to online child sexual exploitation were recorded under the POCSO Act in a single year.
- **Institutional & Community Gaps:**
 - Local police, educators, and Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) lacked standardized training materials and digital forensic awareness tailored to online child safety.
 - Severe digital literacy gaps existed among parents and caregivers in semi-urban and rural areas, with low community awareness regarding grooming tactics, financial sextortion, or official reporting channels.
 - Direct participation of children in digital self-protection policy discussions was negligible.

2. Status at the End of the Last Reporting Period Measurable Progress & Updated Situation Analysis Institutional & Legal Integration: - Multi-state government partnerships were established and operationalized, notably in Karnataka (with the KSCPCR), Maharashtra (with Maharashtra Police), and Odisha (collaborating across Health, Education, WCD, and Police departments). - Standardized training manuals and multilingual awareness toolkits (in Hindi, English, Kannada, Marathi, and Odia) were published and formally integrated into state training modules for teachers, police personnel, and community champions.		
b) What has been the past performance trend? (if relevant) PENCIL PROGRAM The programme has worked in the same 44 schools and 44 Anganwadi Centers in Kota and Baran over earlier phases, and the trend has been steadily positive. In the earlier phases, the groundwork was laid: - Community youth were recruited and trained as education facilitators in foundational literacy and numeracy, SEL and activity-based learning. The same facilitators have been kept on, so the work has stayed continuous. - Anganwadi Workers were trained in a play-based curriculum. - Libraries were set up in schools. At the start of the programme, about 90% of children in Grades 3 to 5 were at the lowest learning level. In the current year, the trend has sped up: - Children reading at Grade 2 level or above rose from 16% to 53%. - Children able to do subtraction or higher rose from 21% to 57%. - Beginner-level children fell to 2% in reading and 1% in maths. - Every grade improved, and Grade 5 showed the strongest gains. Reading has consistently improved faster than maths. Grade 3 maths, especially division and word problems, is the one area where progress has been slower and needs more focus going forward.	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

How the programme is implemented PENCIL is run by a dedicated field team in Kota and Baran. A Field Officer leads the project, supported by two Field Coordinators, one for programmes and one for admin and finance, three Community Mobilizers and 66 education facilitators, who are youth from the local community. Each of the 44 schools has one facilitator, and each Anganwadi facilitator supports two centres. The facilitators work four to five hours a day, six days a week. In the Anganwadi Centers, they run play-based school readiness sessions. In schools, they run foundational literacy and numeracy classes where children are grouped by learning level and taught through activities, stories and teaching-learning materials. Children also attend a weekly one-hour SEL session, and facilitators run the school libraries. Facilitators, teachers and Anganwadi Workers receive two-day training, and facilitators meet every month to plan and review their work. Parents and communities take part through monthly meetings, SEL sessions, awareness drives, children's fairs and celebrations of important days. Children's learning is tracked every quarter through an ASER-based assessment, and the results guide extra support for children and grades that are falling behind. The Senior Specialist, Education provides technical guidance, and the M&E team monitor's progress. Measures for sustainability Sustainability is built into the programme by working within the existing system. Government teachers and Anganwadi Workers are trained and work alongside the facilitators, so that play-based and level-appropriate teaching becomes part of their own daily practice and continues beyond the project. Because the facilitators are local youth, skills and leadership stay within the community. Parents who understand the value of early learning and play continue to support their children at home, and community groups are being built up to look after the libraries and keep reading activities going. The foundational skills children gain stay with them and form the base for all later learning. Good practices are also regularly shared with the education department and district officials to encourage wider adoption. Material change in the last year There has been no change in the components of PENCIL. We have kept our focus on early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy, social and emotional learning, and improving the learning environment in schools, Anganwadi Centers and communities.	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>
d) Please brief out alignment of solution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/national priorities/state priorities/developmental priorities. ChildFund India's integrated programme approach contributes to multiple SDGs by addressing the interconnected drivers of child and family vulnerability. Rather than implementing the SDGs as separate thematic areas, the FY 2025–26 approach links health, education, protection, livelihoods, gender equality, digital safety and climate resilience to improve outcomes for children, families and communities. The strongest direct alignment is with SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17, while several interventions contribute simultaneously to multiple SDG targets.	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

<u>PENCIL PROGRAM</u> Sustainable Development Goals PENCIL contributes most directly to SDG 4, Quality Education. It works towards Target 4.1, that all children complete primary education with relevant learning outcomes, by improving foundational literacy and numeracy in the primary grades. It also works towards Target 4.2, access to quality early childhood development and pre-primary education, by strengthening play-based learning and school readiness in Anganwadi Centres. By engaging girls equally in learning and addressing the norms that pull girls out of school, the programme also supports SDG 5, Gender Equality. By reaching children from poor rural and tribal families, it supports SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities. Its work with government schools, Anganwadi Centres and communities reflects the partnership approach of SDG 17. National priorities The programme is closely aligned with the National Education Policy 2020, which makes foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3 an urgent national priority. It also shares NEP's emphasis on early childhood care and education, play-based and activity-based learning, and children's social and emotional development. It directly supports the NIPUN Bharat Mission's goal that every child reaches foundational learning levels, and it follows the approach of the National Curriculum Framework for the Foundational Stage. The work in Anganwadi Centres is in line with the government's focus on strengthening early learning through the ICDS system and the national ECCE curriculum for children aged 3 to 6. State and development priorities In Rajasthan, PENCIL supports the state's efforts under Samagra Shiksha and NIPUN Bharat to improve foundational learning in government schools and strengthen early education in Anganwadi Centres. By training government teachers and Anganwadi Workers, the programme strengthens the existing public system rather than creating a parallel one. More broadly, it addresses key development priorities in Kota and Baran districts: reducing learning gaps among the most disadvantaged children, improving school attendance and retention, and involving parents and communities in children's education. <u>OSEAC PROGRAM</u> 1. Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) • SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions <i>End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.</i> By creating capacity-building models for local police, state protection bodies, and community committees, the program directly combats Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) and child sexual abuse material (CSAM).		
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• SDG 4: Quality Education-<i>Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments.</i> Promotes digital safety awareness, safe internet access, and digital citizenship in schools, ensuring children can navigate online learning environments without fear of cyberbullying or grooming. • SDG 5: Gender Equality-<i>Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.</i> Addresses gendered online safety threats (such as non-consensual image distribution, financial sextortion, and deepfake "nudifying" apps) that disproportionately target girls and young women.		
e) How have you taken into consideration stakeholder feedback in this reporting period? At the implementation level, programme teams used monitoring data, community engagement, stakeholder consultations, learning from programme implementation and field-level feedback to identify emerging needs and strengthen interventions. This contributed to the FY 2025–26 shift towards more integrated and people-centred programming, connecting health, education, protection, livelihoods, gender and climate resilience rather than addressing these issues independently. Stakeholder engagement also supported stronger government and institutional collaboration, helping align programme activities with local systems and available public services. Overall, stakeholder feedback was considered as part of programme planning, implementation, monitoring and learning, with particular emphasis on ensuring that interventions remained relevant to the needs and experiences of children, families and communities. As part of the FY27 planning process, ChildFund India conducted community consultations before developing the Annual Operating Plan and Budget (AOPB). Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with relevant stakeholders to understand the key needs, priorities, concerns and emerging issues affecting children, families and communities. The findings from these consultations provided important insights into the current needs and priorities of the communities and were used to inform programme planning and prioritisation. The identified needs and recommendations were subsequently considered while developing the FY27 AOPB, helping ensure that planned interventions were relevant, responsive and grounded in community realities. This participatory process strengthened the connection between community perspectives, programme learning and annual planning, ensuring that stakeholder voices were reflected in the priorities and interventions planned for FY27.	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

PENCIL PROGRAM

Stakeholder feedback was regularly collected from children, parents, teachers, Anganwadi Workers, education facilitators, School Management Committees and government officials through review meetings, consultations, surveys and community meetings. Feedback from teachers and Anganwadi Workers was used to refine training content, classroom support and session scheduling, while parents' and community members' suggestions informed the timing and content of engagement activities.

Facilitators: Facilitators met every month to plan and review their work. They shared what was working in their classes, where children were struggling and what support they needed, and their inputs were used to adjust weekly and monthly teaching plans.

Teachers and Anganwadi Workers: Regular meetings with teachers and Anganwadi Workers helped us fit sessions around school timetables and the Anganwadi Workers' health and nutrition duties, so that the programme supported their work rather than adding to their burden. During this period, we also ran a rapid survey with teachers and Anganwadi Workers. It asked how they saw the programme's impact on children and what support they needed in their own work, and the findings were used to shape training content and classroom support.

School Management Committees: School Management Committee meetings brought together parents, teachers and community members to review children's attendance, learning progress and school needs. Their suggestions helped strengthen school and community ownership of the programme and informed our plans at school level.

Parents and communities: Monthly community meetings gave parents a space to discuss their children's progress and raise concerns. Their feedback shaped the timing of meetings, and it led us to focus more on simple activities parents could do at home.

Children's learning: We also treated children's learning data as feedback. The quarterly ASER assessment showed that reading was improving faster than maths and that Grade 3 children needed more support in division and word problems. Based on this, facilitators began focused remedial sessions in Grade 3 maths, more practice in division and more story-based maths activities.

Government officials and the donor: Progress was shared regularly with education department officials and the donor, and their suggestions were built into the planning for the next quarter.

OSEAC PROGRAM During this reporting period, ChildFund India systematically incorporated stakeholder feedback across four primary groups, children/youth, parents/caregivers, state/institutional partners, and frontline child protection workers to adapt and refine its #WebSafeAndWise initiative.		
f) In the last year, what have you seen as the biggest risks to the achievement of the desired impact? How are these being mitigated? <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> The major risks to achieving the intended impact of the STEM Programme relate to the continuity and quality of STEM integration within regular school teaching. Limited teacher capacity, inadequate or poorly maintained STEM resources, competing academic priorities, and the risk of STEM activities being treated as an additional rather than an integrated component of classroom learning may affect sustained utilization of the programme. There is also a risk that weaker learners and disadvantaged students may not benefit equally from STEM activities, while limited institutional ownership and follow-up after external project support may affect sustainability. To mitigate these risks, the programme has focused on strengthening teacher capacity through practical training, providing STEM labs, science kits, Mini Science Centers and smart classroom resources, and promoting the integration of STEM activities into regular classroom timetables. Schools and teachers are being encouraged to take greater ownership of STEM sessions, while School Management Committees support continued lab activities and exhibitions. Remedial and peer-learning approaches can further support students who require additional assistance. Continued monitoring through education-system structures, local ownership, resource-maintenance mechanisms and transition planning are important measures to sustain programme gains beyond the project period. <u>PENCIL PROGRAM</u> The key risk identified during the reporting year is the programme's dependence on education facilitators for delivering daily learning support, remedial sessions, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), and library activities. Much of the progress achieved by children has been supported by the facilitators' regular presence. While government teachers have been trained in the same approaches, their involvement is currently more concentrated within regular classroom hours, partly due to workload and administrative responsibilities. Therefore, withdrawal of facilitators could create a risk of reduced learning support and a slowdown or reversal of learning gains.	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

To mitigate this risk, ChildFund India is gradually transitioning ownership and responsibilities to government teachers and the existing education system. Teachers are being encouraged to co-facilitate sessions with education facilitators, and the programme methodology is increasingly being integrated into regular classroom teaching rather than treated as an additional activity. Ready-to-use teaching-learning materials are also being provided, while teachers demonstrating stronger engagement are encouraged to act as champions and support peer adoption. In addition, School Management Committees, community groups, parents and the education department are being engaged to strengthen local ownership and ensure continued monitoring and support for children's learning. This system-strengthening approach is intended to reduce dependency on project-supported facilitators and improve the sustainability of programme outcomes after project support reduces. Other emerging risks include the continued learning gap in mathematics, particularly among Grade 3 children, and the need for stronger parent engagement, dedicated learning spaces and regular teaching-learning materials. These are being addressed through focused remedial sessions, additional practice in division and word problems, story-based mathematics activities, stakeholder feedback, and continued engagement with teachers, parents and communities. Overall, the mitigation strategy is shifting from facilitator-led delivery towards greater ownership by teachers, Anganwadi Workers, parents, School Management Committees and government systems, thereby strengthening the sustainability of the desired impact.		
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3) Impact Indicators		
Item	S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
a) What are the indicators used to evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of programmes ChildFund India uses a results-based monitoring and evaluation framework to assess programme effectiveness, progress and outcomes. Indicators are aligned with the programme results framework, thematic priorities and SDGs, and measure both the reach of interventions and the changes experienced by children, youth, families and communities. Key indicators include health and nutrition outcomes; learning and education outcomes; livelihood and economic empowerment; child and youth participation and agency; child protection and online safety; gender and adolescent well-being; climate resilience and environmental sustainability; and community and institutional capacity strengthening. Programme effectiveness is further assessed through quantitative and qualitative methods, including beneficiary feedback, stakeholder consultations, outcome assessments and, where applicable, comparison between intervention and non-intervention groups. Thus, the effectiveness of programmes is assessed by examining both the scale of programme delivery and the extent to which interventions contribute to measurable changes in the lives of children, youth, families and communities A strategic tool designed to monitor progress, evaluate impact, and support ChildFund's 2030 goal of reaching 10 million children and family members. Core Structure: Focuses on 10 Key Impact Outcomes (KIOs) selected from 50 total metrics based on criteria like child-centeredness, SDG alignment, and life-stage coverage The 10 Strategic KIOs: 1. Safe Drinking Water 2. Child Malnutrition Reduction 3. Developmentally On Track 4. School Achievement 5. Safety in the Home 6. Psychosocial Well-being 7. Online Safety / Reduced Risk 8. Youth Work Readiness & Skills 9. Food Security 10. Ecosystem & Sustainability Participation	Must Reply	Must Reply

STEM PROGRAM

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework use tailored indicators across every project phase to measure operational scale, classroom adoption, and long-term educational impact:

1. Output Indicators (Operational Delivery & Input Reach)

Evaluated continuously (monthly tracking against annual target plans):

- Infrastructure & Setup Metrics: Number of Mini Science Centers, smart classrooms, science kits, and digital tools successfully installed and functional in government schools.
- Capacity Building Volume: Number of teachers, school principals, and Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) trained in activity-based learning and digital equipment usage.
- Direct Participant Reach: Total count of students (disaggregated by gender, grade level 6–10, and marginalized background) enrolled and participating in STEM activities.
- Timeliness & Variance Tracking: On-time completion rate of planned activity targets within the strict project delivery calendar (e.g., monthly monitoring against FY target plans).

2. Intermediate Outcome Indicators (Mid-Term to End-Term)

Evaluated from the mid-point through the final year using pre/posttests, KAP surveys, and classroom observations:

- Academic Conceptual Understanding: Test score gains in Science and Mathematics compared to non-intervention control groups (e.g., intervention students outperforming peers by 2–3 points).
- Pedagogical Shift: Percentage of teachers moving away from rote-learning methods to independently facilitating practical, hands-on experiments and digital simulations (e.g., 81.8% adoption rate).
- Student Attitude & Confidence: Percentage of students (specifically female students) reporting increased interest, curiosity, and confidence in solving STEM problems (e.g., 91% reported increased subject interest).
- Resource Utilization Rate: Frequency and consistency with which smart boards, science models, and lab kits are actively integrated into routine classroom schedules (e.g., 87.4% functional utilization).

3. Overall Outcome & Impact Indicators (End-Term & Post-Project Exit)

Evaluated at project closeout and during post-exit gestation phases to verify sustainability:

- Career & Higher Education Aspirations: Percentage of rural students expressing a concrete intent to pursue secondary/tertiary STEM streams or technical careers.
- Sustained Teacher Independence: Percentage of school educators conducting complete STEM curricula and interactive sessions without external assistance or NGO field presence (e.g., 93.7% independence level).
- Local Institutional Ownership & Budgeting: Percentage of School Management Committees (SMCs) and School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) independently allocating local budgets for lab maintenance, replacement of consumables, and science fairs.
- Gender Parity & Academic Retention: Reduction in school dropout rates and equalized academic achievement gaps among rural female students in secondary education

PENCIL PROGRAM

We track PENCIL's effectiveness through a set of outcomes and output indicators across its four components. They are measured through learning assessments, attendance records, child portfolios, training reports and activity records.

Overall outcome indicators

- Percentage of 6-year-old children who achieve school readiness, measured through the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) tool
- Percentage of children aged 6 to 14 who achieve age-appropriate foundational learning outcomes

Early Childhood Care and Education

- Percentage of children aged 3 to 6 with more than 75% attendance at the Anganwadi Centre (target 85%)
- Number of Anganwadi Workers and facilitators trained in the play-based curriculum and SEL package
- Number of Anganwadi Centers supplied with stimulation play materials and teaching-learning materials

Foundational Literacy and Numeracy

- Percentage of children at each reading level (beginner, letter, word, paragraph, story, and answering questions on a story), measured each quarter through the ASER-based assessment
- Percentage of children at each math level (beginner, number recognition 1 to 9 and 11 to 99, addition, subtraction, division and word problems)
- Percentage of children reading at Grade 2 level or above, and able to do subtraction or higher
- Percentage of enrolled primary children with more than 75% attendance over three consecutive months (target 85%)
- Number of facilitators and government teachers trained in foundational learning methods, with pre and post training test results

Social and Emotional Learning

- Percentage of children who show improvement in SEL competencies, tracked through child portfolios (target 90%)
- Number of schools receiving and using SEL kits
- Number of teachers trained in SEL
- Number of parents attending more than five SEL sessions in a year (target 2,500)

Learning environment at home and in the community

- Percentage of children using the library at least once a month (target 85%)
- Number of community awareness drives and community meetings held
- Number of School Management Committee meetings held, and actions taken on their suggestions
- Number of children's fairs and events held in schools
- Number of copies of the children's magazine and the teachers' resource magazine printed and distributed

OSEAC PROGRAM

ChildFund India analyzed the effectiveness and outcomes of the #WebSafeAndWise initiative and related Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) interventions using a structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. The evaluation framework uses key indicators grouped by campaign pillar and structural objective:

1. Indicators for Child Empowerment & Digital Citizenship (Participation)

- **Knowledge and Awareness Gains:** Percentage of participating children who can correctly identify online threats, including grooming, cyberbullying, financial sextortion, and non-consensual sharing of AI-generated content or deepfakes.
- **Digital Self-Care & Behavioral Adoption:** Percentage of trained youth who actively apply safety measures, such as adjusting privacy settings, rejecting unknown contact requests, avoiding suspicious in-game/chat links, and protecting personal data.
- **Confidence & Help-Seeking Intent:** Proportion of children reporting confidence in seeking help from trusted adults or reporting mechanisms when encountering uncomfortable or abusive online situations.
- **Peer-to-Peer Champion Outreach:** Number of youth leaders trained as "Champions" (*e.g., through Children's Advisory Councils and youth leadership modules*) and the total number of peers they reach through secondary workshops.

2. Indicators for Community & Caregiver Capacity (Protection)

- **Parental/Caregiver Digital Literacy:** Percentage of parents and caregivers demonstrating improved understanding of online risks, grooming red flags, and basic parental oversight tools.
- **Attitudinal Shifts Toward Open Communication:** Proportion of caregivers who shift from punitive approaches (*e.g., blanket device bans*) to supportive digital co-piloting and non-judgmental communication.
- **Community Awareness Reach:** Total number of parents, local leaders, and community members participating in localized, multilingual digital safety workshops.

3. Indicators for Institutional Integration & Duty-Bearer Engagement

- **Training and Capacity of Duty-Bearers:** Number of schoolteachers, police officers, frontline Child Welfare Committee (CWC) members, and local protection workers trained using standardized state manuals.
- **Institutionalization of Toolkits:** Number of state departments (*e.g., Education, Police, Women & Child Development*) that formally adopt, publish, and embed training manuals into official civil service or school curricula.
- **Inter-Agency Coordination:** Number of formalized multi-stakeholder platforms or task forces established with government bodies (such as State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights like KSCPCR, MSCPCR, OSCPCR)

i) Timeline specific output indicators from inception to end of project (1) Number of interventions implemented (2) Timeliness of intervention delivery (3) % of planned vs. achieved programmes <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> The ChildFund India has the robust monitoring system to capture the plan and track the progress in time bound manner, The STEM programme progressed from addressing limited STEM infrastructure and practical learning opportunities at inception towards equipped schools, capacitated teachers, regular classroom integration, improved student engagement and confidence, and stronger institutional ownership by the end of the reporting/evaluation period <u>PENCIL program</u> During the reporting period, all 23 planned output-level interventions were reported as completed and on monthly basis, providing a clear basis for tracking implementation performance from the beginning to the end of the reporting period <u>OSEAC PROGRAM</u> Number of children (ages 6–18) completing interactive digital safety and cyber hygiene modules. Number of parents, caregivers, and community members attending digital co-piloting and online protection workshops. Number of primary duty-bearers (teachers, police officers, CWC members, Anganwadi workers) trained on OSEAC detection and reporting workflows. Total number of peer-to-peer digital citizenship sessions facilitated by trained youth champions in local schools. Count of multi-stakeholder consultations hosted across education, law enforcement, and child protection sectors	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>
ii) Intermediate outcomes indicators (for example) - start around mid-term and continue to end-term of project (1) Increased awareness or knowledge among the target population (2) Changes in attitudes or perceptions (3) Adoption of new behaviors or practices (4) Improved skills or capabilities (5) Increased access to resources or services <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> ChildFund India follows a practice of conducting periodic assessments throughout the programme cycle to assess progress and the effectiveness of interventions. These include Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) assessments, pre- and post-	<i>Must Reply when applicable</i>	<i>Must Reply when applicable</i>

tests for training programmes, periodic monitoring and reviews, and mid-term evaluations. These assessment mechanisms help determine changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices, participation and other relevant outcome areas. The STEM project follows systematic monitoring, assessment and learning approach to assess the effectiveness of interventions and track progress towards intended results. Periodic assessments are conducted at different stages of implementation, including Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) assessments, pre- and post-tests associated with training and capacity-building activities, periodic monitoring, and mid-term evaluation. For the STEM project, these assessments focus on changes in students' learning outcomes, interest and engagement in STEM, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, creativity, communication, teaching practices, teacher capacity, availability and use of STEM-related infrastructure, and the overall quality of project implementation. The mid-term evaluation further provides evidence on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the intervention. <u>PENCIL PROGRAM</u> In the PENCIL Program, the intermediate outcomes were not formally measured through a separate structured outcome assessment during the reporting period; instead, field observations, stakeholder feedback and rapid surveys provided evidence of emerging changes <u>OSEAC PROGRAM</u> There are 3 key major intermentiate outcome expectation from the program, Behavior Change & Youth Digital Empowerment Indicators Caregiver & Community Capability Indicators Institutional Adoption & Systemic Change Indicators		
iii) Overall outcome indicators (for e.g.) towards end-term and after end of the project period (depends on project gestation period) (1) Behavioral change sustained over time (2) Improved social or economic conditions (3) Reduced rates of negative outcomes (e.g., poverty, disease, crime) (4) Enhanced quality of life (5) Increased resilience to future challenges <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> By the end of the project/evaluation period, the STEM Programme demonstrated improved practical STEM learning, student confidence and engagement, integration of STEM resources into classroom teaching, strengthened teacher practice and	<i>Must Reply when applicable</i>	<i>Must Reply when applicable</i>

increased STEM career interest. The programme also demonstrated emerging institutional ownership, with teachers independently conducting STEM sessions and school-level structures supporting continuation of activities. In the post-project period, the key outcome indicators should focus on whether these gains are sustained without intensive external support, particularly continued use of STEM laboratories and learning resources, teacher-led practical STEM sessions, integration of STEM activities into regular teaching, maintenance of learning outcomes, and continued student interest in STEM.

PENCILPROGRAM

PENCIL has worked in Kota and Baran since August 2022. The longer-term outcomes below are early signs of change seen towards the end of the project. Full impact will become clearer over time.

1. **Behavioral change sustained over time:** Teachers and Anganwadi Workers have taken the new practices into their daily teaching, not just the training room. In the rapid survey, 98% of teachers reported regularly using teaching-learning materials and 96% reported adapting their teaching to children's learning levels. All Anganwadi Workers and ECCE facilitators reported using songs, games and storytelling regularly. Since most respondents have been trained across several years and themes, these practices are well rooted and likely to continue.
2. **Improved social or economic conditions:** Children from poor rural and tribal families now have stronger foundational skills, which is the base for staying in school and building better future opportunities. The 66 local youth who worked as facilitators gained skills, income and standing in their communities.
3. **Reduced rates of negative outcomes:** The share of children at beginner level fell from 17% to 2% in reading and from 12% to 1% in math. Anganwadi Workers reported improved attendance and school readiness among young children. Together, these lower the risk of children falling behind, losing interest and dropping out.
4. **Enhanced quality of life:** Children are more confident, expressive and engaged in learning. Nearly all teachers and Anganwadi Workers reported improvement in children's confidence and emotional expression. Schools and Anganwadi Centers have become more joyful, safe and child friendly spaces.
5. **Increased resilience to future challenges:** Strong reading, maths and social and emotional skills give children a foundation to handle later learning and life challenges. Trained teachers, Anganwadi Workers, School Management Committees and engaged parents strengthen the local system to keep supporting children after the project. Survey feedback also points to what is still needed to sustain this: dedicated space, regular supply of teaching materials and stronger parent engagement.

OSEAC PROGRAM

Under ChildFund India's #WebSafeAndWise initiative and the global ChildFund Alliance WEB Safe & Wise strategic framework (aligned with SDG 16.2), overall outcome indicators measure long-term, sustained impacts. These indicators mature toward the project's end and persist well beyond its active gestation period as institutionalized systems take over.

4) Relevance and Sustainability (Please share in 3-5 sentences with a supporting fact/ data point)		
Item	S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
i) Relevance: Explain with a supporting fact/ data point how the initiative aligns with the organization's values and goals and is relevant to the target audience ChildFund India core mission focuses on supporting Deprived, vulnerable, excluded children develop the capacity to improve their lives and become leaders who drive lasting change in their communities. The organization's values emphasize child-centered agencies, gender equity, innovation, and community-rooted sustainability. <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> The STEM Initiative directly aligns these core organizational values and strategic commitments in three keyways: 1. Strategic Pillar Alignment (Learning & Education in a Digital Age): The project advances Child Fund's Global Results Framework by focusing on Life Stage 2 (Ages 6–14) and the <i>Learning</i> domain. It shifts rural instruction away from passive, traditional methods toward experiential, tech-enabled learning. 2. Promoting Child Agency & Equity: By equipping rural government schools with Mini Science Centers and smart classrooms, the project breaks down structural barriers for marginalized children and addresses historical gender gaps in STEM fields. 3. Locally Led Sustainability: ChildFund prioritizes building long-term community capacity rather than short-term dependency. Handing operational ownership to school staff and local School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) fulfills Child Fund's core value of fostering institutional self-reliance. PENCIL PROGRAM Alignment with the organization's values and goals: ChildFund India's vision is "an India where children lead a dignified life and achieve their full potential". Since 1984, it has been working with children from the most remote and marginalized communities, supporting them from early childhood to youth, and education is at the heart of that work. PENCIL reflects this directly. It focuses on children aged 3 to 14 from poor rural and tribal families and builds the foundational skills that decide whether a child stays in school and does well. It also looks after children's emotional wellbeing, which reflects Child Fund's focus on the whole child. And it strengthens government schools and Anganwadi Centers rather than creating a parallel system, in line with ChildFund's commitment to working with the government for lasting change. Relevance to the target audience: The need in the project area was urgent. At the start of the programme, about 90% of children in Grades 3 to 5 in the project schools were at the lowest learning level. Only 16% of children could read a Grade 2 level text, compared with 18.7% of Grade 3 children nationally (ASER 2024). The programme was designed around these gaps, and the results show it met a real need: by the end of the year, children reading at Grade 2 level or above rose to 53%, and those able to do subtraction or higher rose from 21% to 57%. Teachers and Anganwadi Workers also found it relevant to	Must Reply	Must Reply

their work. They rated the trainings 4.7 and 4.85 out of 5, and 95% or more reported regularly using the new methods in their classrooms.		
ii) Sustainability: Explain with a supporting fact/ data point how the initiative is sustainable and if it can continue to make a positive impact in the future. The initiative is strongly aligned with major Government of India priorities and reforms, including NEP 2020, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), Samagra Shiksha, Digital India, IndiaAI Mission, Skill India Mission, and the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. Through this integrated approach, ChildFund India is creating a sustainable rural STEM ecosystem that equips children with knowledge, skills, innovation, and confidence for future education, employment, and responsible citizenship <u>PENCIL PROGRAM</u> PENCIL is built to last because it works through people and systems that will stay in the community after the project ends. Government teachers and Anganwadi Workers are trained and work alongside the facilitators, so the methods become part of their daily practice. The rapid survey shows this is already happening. Of the 106 teachers and facilitators surveyed, 96 had attended FLN training in the last three years. 98% reported regularly using teaching-learning materials, and 99% said they can make low-cost or no-cost materials themselves, so classrooms do not depend on outside supplies. All Anganwadi Workers and ECCE facilitators reported regularly using play-based methods such as songs, games and storytelling. Many of these Anganwadi Workers are long serving, with 35% having over 20 years of service, so the skills stay within the system for years to come. The skills children gain are also lasting. Children reading at Grade 2 level or above rose from 16% to 53%, and once children can read and do basic maths, those skills become the base for all their later learning. The programme's roots in the community add to this. The 66 facilitators are local youth, School Management Committees and parents take an active part, and school libraries remain in use. To continue making an impact, some support is still needed. Teachers mostly apply the methods within their class periods, and the surveys point to a need for dedicated space, a regular supply of teaching materials and stronger parent engagement. With continued engagement with the education department, and with teachers gradually taking over the facilitators' role, the approach can keep benefiting children in Kota and Baran and can be adopted in other government schools. <u>OSEAC PROGRAM</u> ChildFund India's core mission focuses on ensuring child protection, promoting child participation, and fostering systemic, sustainable development for marginalized communities. • Child Protection (Pillar 1): The initiative operationalizes ChildFund's fundamental mandate—safeguarding children from abuse, violence, and exploitation—by extending protection frameworks beyond physical harm into digital spaces.	<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

• Child Participation & Rights (Pillar 2): Rather than treating children purely as passive victims, the program aligns with ChildFund's value of youth empowerment. Through peer-champion models (e.g., <i>e-Saksham</i>, <i>Udaan</i>) and Children's Advisory Councils, youth actively shape safety messaging and advocate for their rights. • Systemic Institutionalization over Isolated Pilots: The project aligns with ChildFund's strategic goal of sustainable impact by integrating training manuals directly into state government systems (Education, WCD, Police), avoiding short-term, unsustainable project dependencies		
a) Briefly include narratives of Social, Environmental, Cultural and Economic impact on target segment(s) in the reporting period. <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> During the reporting period, the initiative generated interconnected social, environmental, cultural, and economic impacts across target students, educators, and rural school communities: • Social Impact: The program significantly enhanced educational equity and academic self-efficacy in rural government schools. Hands-on STEM tools and digital smart classrooms enabled intervention students to score 2 to 3 points higher on core assessments, with 91% of participants reporting increased academic confidence and curiosity. • Environmental Impact: By embedding climate resilience, disaster awareness, and hands-on scientific inquiry into school activities, students utilized STEM concepts to better understand local natural resource management and environmental challenges within their communities. • Cultural Impact: The project drove a fundamental shift away from traditional rote-learning norms toward inquiry-led, experiential education. It challenged persistent gender biases by encouraging rural girls to actively participate in science labs, resulting in 91.2% of students—including young women—aspiring to pursue post-secondary STEM careers. Economic Impact: Equipping rural youth with foundational digital skills, critical thinking, and STEM exposure directly improves their future employability in higher-growth sectors. Furthermore, local governance bodies (SDMCs) began co-funding and allocating minimal municipal/school budgets to maintain lab infrastructure, fostering long-term economic self-reliance and asset preservation within <u>PENCIL PROGRAM</u> PENCIL is built to last because it works through people and systems that will stay in the community after the project ends. Government teachers and Anganwadi Workers are trained and work alongside the facilitators, so the methods become part of their daily practice. The rapid survey shows this is already happening. Of the 106 teachers and facilitators surveyed, 96 had	<i>Must share any impact observed on the target segment</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

attended FLN training in the last three years. 98% reported regularly using teaching-learning materials, and 99% said they can make low-cost or no-cost materials themselves, so classrooms do not depend on outside supplies. All Anganwadi Workers and ECCE facilitators reported regularly using play-based methods such as songs, games and storytelling. Many of these Anganwadi Workers are long serving, with 35% having over 20 years of service, so the skills stay within the system for years to come. The skills children gain are also lasting. Children reading at Grade 2 level or above rose from 16% to 53%, and once children can read and do basic maths, those skills become the base for all their later learning. The programme's roots in the community add to this. The 66 facilitators are local youth, School Management Committees and parents take an active part, and school libraries remain in use. To continue making an impact, some support is still needed. Teachers mostly apply the methods within their class periods, and the surveys point to a need for dedicated space, a regular supply of teaching materials and stronger parent engagement. With continued engagement with the education department, and with teachers gradually taking over the facilitators' role, the approach can keep benefiting children in Kota and Baran and can be adopted in other government schools. <u>OSEAC PROGRAM</u> ChildFund India's #WebSafeAndWise initiative addresses Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) including grooming, CSAM, financial sextortion, and AI-driven deepfakes targeting vulnerable, first-generation digital users aged 6–18 in rural and semi-urban India. The project aligns directly with SDG 16.2, SDG 4, SDG 5, India's POCSO Act (2012), NEP 2020, and state child rights mandates.		
b) Beneficiary/Stakeholder Validation through surveys and other feedback mechanisms <u>STEM PROGRAM</u> During the project phase, the beneficiary and stakeholder validation was carried out and feedback has been received as part of the impact evaluation and stakeholder meeting such as SMC, Teachers, PTA and students Pre- & Post-Training Assessments: Administered to students and educators to validate immediate knowledge gains, skill mastery, and resource usability. KAP & Household Surveys: Measure community-wide shifts in attitudes toward female education, hygiene, child protection, and STEM careers.	<i>Must Reply based on any simple method of validation</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

PENCIL PROGRAM

Survey with teachers and education facilitators: A survey with 106 government teachers and school facilitators across the 44 schools confirmed the programme's value:

- They rated the trainings 4.7 out of 5.
- 96% agreed that their knowledge and confidence in FLN and SEL had improved.
- 95% reported regularly using the new methods in class.
- Almost all reported improvement in children's reading, numeracy, participation and confidence.
- They asked for more teaching-learning materials, stronger parent engagement and dedicated classroom space.

Survey with Anganwadi Workers and ECCE facilitators: A survey with 76 respondents (45 Anganwadi Workers and 31 ECCE facilitators) showed similar results:

- They rated the trainings 4.85 out of 5.
- 95% reported gains in capacity and confidence.
- 97% reported regularly using play-based practices.
- All reported improvement in children's language, attendance and school readiness.
- Their main requests were a facilitator stationed at each center, more play materials and space for activities.

Learning assessments: Two rounds of ASER-based assessment with 1,314 children in Grades 3 to 5 gave independent evidence that learning had improved. Children reading at Grade 2 level or above rose from 16% to 53%, and those able to do subtraction or higher rose from 21% to 57%.

Other feedback channels: Monthly facilitator review meetings, School Management Committee meetings and community meetings gave parents, teachers and community members a regular space to share their views on the programme. Their feedback was used to adjust teaching plans, meeting times and support for children who were falling behind.

OSEAC PROGRAM

ChildFund India validates the relevance, safety, and effectiveness of its #WebSafeAndWise initiative through a multi-tiered monitoring, evaluation, and feedback loop. This system collects data across four key stakeholder groups children, parents/caregivers, school/community leaders, and state duty-bearers

5) Photographs conveying before and after impact of the Programme

(a maximum of 3 impact situations may be shared per Programme)

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

6) Annexures

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
<i>Must Reply</i>	<i>Must Reply</i>

Item	NA	Yes	No
1. Blank copy of any questionnaire or survey forms used			No
2. Summary analysis of surveys undertaken			No
3. Impact Map linking outputs and outcomes to activities		Yes	
4. Copies of other consultation details (such as focus group write-ups, workshop notes, etc.)			No
5. Copies of evidence summarized or quoted in the social impact report			No
6. Notes of the previous social impact assessment meetings (when applicable)	NA		
7. Past Social Impact Assessment Statements for the projects funded by the Listed Security (when applicable)	NA		
8. Completion certificate of approved mandatory capacity building workshops	NA		
9. Case Studies/ Stakeholder Testimonials		Yes	
10. All stand-alone reports and that have contributed to the organisation's impact reporting for this period		Yes	

SSE may specify additional parameters that may be required to be disclosed by SE in its AIR

Form 1B.3 Declaration

S1: Upto Rs1 Cr	S2: More than Rs1 Cr
Must Reply	Must Reply

I hereby certify that all the information provided in this report is correct and that all documents submitted by our organisation are true copies.

Authorized Representative of ChildFund India

Name: Anand Vishwakarma, Executive Director

Anand Kumar
Vishwakarma

Digitally signed by Anand
Kumar Vishwakarma
Date: 2026.09.30 20:11:46
+05'30'

Date: 30-Sep-2026

Place: New Delhi

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Form 1B.4 Statement of Compliance

I, Anand Kumar Vishwakarma, Executive Director of ChildFund India certify that:

- a. All activities undertaken by the Social Enterprise are in conformity with the objectives as stated in the relevant constitution documents and aligned to the vision, purpose and mission of the Social Enterprise
- b. Activities reflect primacy of Social intent in the functioning of the Social Enterprise as per SEBI Act and regulations made thereunder that at least 67 percent* of our organisation's activities cover target population segments/ entities that are under-served or less privileged or live in regions recording lower performance in the development priorities of central or state governments (immediately preceding 3-year average of revenues/ expenditure/ total customer base and/or total number of beneficiaries)
- c. I have reviewed the financial statements prepared by the Social Enterprise for the year ended 31 March 2026 and to the best of my knowledge and belief these Statements do not contain any materially untrue statement or omit any material fact or contain statements that might be misleading. Further, these Statements together present a true and fair view of the Social Enterprise's affairs and follow the relevant Accounting Standards, applicable laws and regulations
- d. To the best of my knowledge and belief, no transactions entered by the Social Enterprise during the year ended 31 March 2026 are fraudulent, illegal or violative of the laws, regulations and policies and procedures of the Social Enterprise. Social Enterprise has complied with all applicable laws and regulations as applicable for the Social Enterprise
- e. I accept responsibility for establishing and maintaining internal controls for operations as well as financial reporting and the Social Enterprise has implemented and evaluated the effectiveness of internal control systems of the social enterprise in the conduct of operations and reporting thereon
- f. I am not aware of any instance during the year of significant fraud with involvement therein of the management or any employee having a significant role in the Social Enterprise's internal control systems.

Name: Anand Vishwakarma
Executive Director of ChildFund India

Anand Kumar
Vishwakarma

Digitally signed by
Anand Kumar
Vishwakarma
Date: 2026.09.30
20:07:44 +05'30'

Date: 30-Sep-2026

Place: New Delhi

Beneficiaries includes entities such as individual, person, thing, article, unit, body, creature

ChildFund India

Annexures to Form 1B.2 – Annual Impact Report (Self-Reported)

NSE SSE Registration No. NSESENPO00144 | FY 2025-26 (01-Apr-2025 to 31-Mar-2026)

Contents

No.	Document	Form 1B reference	Page(s)
Form 1B	Form 1B (1B.1 Annual Disclosures, 1B.2 Annual Impact Report, 1B.3 Declaration, 1B.4 Statement of Compliance) – digitally signed by the Executive Director	1B.1 – 1B.4	1–47
I1	Photographs conveying impact – STEM, PENCIL and OSEAC programmes	1B.2.1 item 5	49–53
I2	Case studies / stakeholder testimonials – OSEAC (#WebSafeAndWise) sessions	1B.2.1 item 6(9)	54–55
I3	Summary Report – Impact Evaluation of STEM Programme, Raichur, Karnataka (Apr–Jun 2025)	1B.2.1 item 6(10)	56–58
I4	Impact Evaluation of STEM Programme, Raichur, Karnataka – full report	1B.2.1 item 6(10)	59–145
I5	PENCIL – Learning Outcome Assessment FY 2026 (ASER tool), Q1–Q4 numeracy and reading	1B.2.1 item 6(10)	146–161
I6	OSEAC Study – Karnataka State Study Report (28-May-2025)	1B.2.1 item 6(10)	162–247

Form 1B (including 1B.2 at pages 11–45) is reproduced in full and unaltered so that the Executive Director's digital signatures remain valid. This compilation is appended after the signed form; page numbers refer to this file.

The Impact Map (annexure item 3, marked "Yes") is not a separate document in the material provided; if it exists separately it should be added, or item 3 should refer to the relevant pages of Form 1B.2.

Photographs conveying impact – Form 1B.2 item 5

STEM Programme – Mini Science Centres and STEM labs, Raichur, Karnataka



Photographs conveying impact – Form 1B.2 item 5

STEM Programme – Mini Science Centres and STEM labs, Raichur, Karnataka (contd.)



Photographs conveying impact – Form 1B.2 item 5

STEM Programme – Mini Science Centres and STEM labs, Raichur, Karnataka (contd.)



Photographs conveying impact – Form 1B.2 item 5

PENCIL Programme – Early learning / FLN centre



Photographs conveying impact – Form 1B.2 item 5

OSEAC Programme – Statewide Online Safety Capacity Building, Karnataka



Statewide Online Safety Capacity Building (Karnataka) Partnered with senior leadership including the WCD Minister, ADGP, and Principal Secretaries at Vikasa Soudha to train DySPs, DDPIs, and DCPOs across all 31 districts on digital child protection.

Result Framework Projects (R)

Case Story 1: Web Safe & Wise Session Promotes Open Dialogue on Online Safety



At Lt. Bahusaheb Appa Jadhav Urdu School, an awareness session encouraged students to share their experiences related to online behavior and safety. Students shared a real incident from their neighborhood— a young girl had been manipulated online by an unknown man into a dangerous in-person meeting. Community members had intervened and alerted the police.

The incident prompted a serious discussion about the risks of interacting with strangers online. Trainers used this opportunity to guide students on identifying unsafe online behaviour, protecting personal information, and immediately seeking help from trusted adults. Teachers appreciated the safe platform where children could speak openly about such concerns — and the session reinforced the importance of continuous digital safety education.

Case Story 2: Students Become Digital Safety Champions through Creative Learning

At Shaheed Abdul Hakim Urdu School, students were so inspired by the OSEAC awareness session that they created and performed two short dramas during the school assembly. The plays highlighted the dangers of interacting with strangers through online games and social media — and the importance of speaking up against inappropriate behavior.

Teachers continued discussions on digital safety after the session, creating a supportive environment where children felt comfortable approaching trusted adults.

The initiative strengthened students' confidence to speak about unsafe situations and encouraged them to act as peer advocates for safe and responsible digital engagement.



Case Story 3: From Silence to Confidence — A Student Shares Her Online Safety Experience

In one of our intervention school, a girl student had been silently carrying the discomfort of having encountered an inappropriate video while browsing reels on her phone. Fear and uncertainty had kept her silent. After attending the awareness session, she found the courage to first approach her teacher, then share her experience with fellow students and the project

team during a follow-up visit. She declared that she would use her phone mainly for education, avoid unnecessary apps, and never communicate with strangers online. Her openness encouraged other students to reflect on their own digital behaviour — demonstrating how a single session can break the silence around online safety and empower children to take control.

Case Story 4: From Fear to Action — Awareness Session Helps Student Report Online Exploitation

At Genba Sopan Moze Secondary School, an 8th-standard child had been using Snapchat when she accepted a friend request from an unknown boy. After they began exchanging photos, she decided to stop communicating — but the other person responded with threats and blackmail. Frightened and isolated, she kept the matter to herself. After attending the OSEAC awareness session, she realised what she was experiencing was a form of online exploitation — and that seeking help was not only possible but essential. She shared the incident with her family and, with her father's support, filed a police complaint. The perpetrator stopped the threatening behaviour. This case powerfully demonstrates how timely awareness can transform a child's response to exploitation — from fear and silence to informed, courageous action.

Summary Report – Impact Evaluation of STEM Program in Raichur, Karnataka

Duration: April-June 2025

Geography: Raichur district, Karnataka

Background and Rationale

Among Karnataka's most educationally backward districts, Raichur faces high dropout rates and limited science infrastructure in rural schools. In response, ChildFund India introduced a comprehensive STEM program that aimed to enhance conceptual understanding, classroom engagement, and career aspirations among students, particularly girls and students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

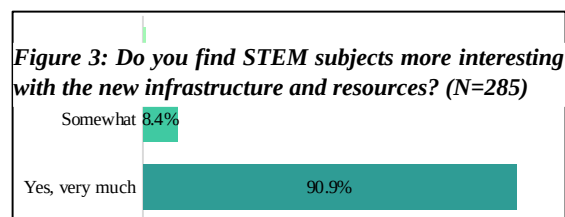
Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design with 565 students, 285 students from the intervention group, and 280 students from the non-intervention group of grades 6th -10th. Bivariate and multivariable regression analyses were done to assess the effectiveness of STEM programs. The qualitative analysis was conducted through interviews and discussions with 31 stakeholders (parents, teachers, principals, students, and community members), providing insights into implementation, perception, and sustainability.

Key Findings

Relevance:

The STEM intervention proved highly relevant to students' developmental needs, with 85% reporting increased curiosity, 82% experiencing new and engaging learning approaches, and 91% finding STEM subjects more interesting due to enhanced infrastructure and resources (**Figure 1**). Teachers echoed this impact, noting that the integration of STEM tools made classroom teaching more effective and aligned with students' interests. As one teacher shared, *"Students want to learn through innovative methods that were made possible by integrating STEM infrastructure at schools."* In contrast, educators from non-intervention schools highlighted the



pressing need for similar support, expressing challenges in adopting activity-based learning due to the absence of digital content and teaching aids. One teacher reflected, *"If I had a smart board or lab, I could teach better, and maybe they would be more excited about learning."*

Coherence: The STEM intervention was well aligned with the NEP 2020 goals, with 79.3% of students reporting frequent integration of STEM activities into regular classes and 87% stating that teachers regularly encouraged the use of STEM resources like labs and digital boards (**Figure 2**). STEM activities were well-aligned with the school syllabus and the NEP's focus on experiential learning. A teacher from an intervention school shared,

"The concepts from training matched our textbook chapters—only they showed us how to teach better," while a principal added, "We use models while teaching regular topics. It helps in reinforcement." In contrast, teachers from non-intervention schools highlighted the lack of curriculum enrichment and resources. One noted, *"We try to follow NEP, but we have no digital content or models to support activity-based teaching,"* emphasizing the urgent need for STEM infrastructure to enable engaging, hands-on learning.

Effectiveness: The STEM program significantly enhanced teaching efficiency and student engagement in

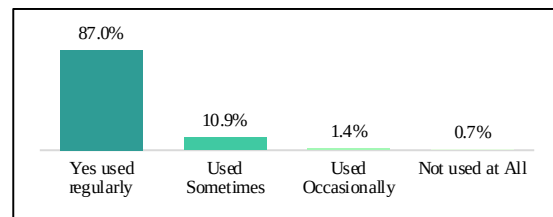
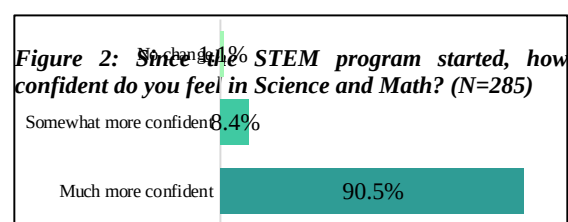


Figure 1: Do your teachers encourage using STEM resources like labs and digital boards in class? (N=285)

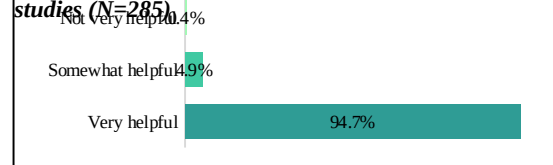
intervention schools. Over 91% of students reported increased confidence in Science and Math, and 81.8% reported the use of more practical teaching methods (**Figure 3**). Notably, weaker students showed marked improvement through activity-based learning, and girls participated more confidently, supported by encouragement from teachers and parents. One teacher noted, *"Students get very excited during these sessions and show more interest than in regular classes,"* while another highlighted that *STEM activities also contributed to higher attendance and active classroom participation.*

Efficiency: The STEM program significantly improved instructional efficiency and resource utilization in intervention schools. 87.4% of students reported that STEM resources were consistently functional and well-maintained, while 94.7% affirmed that time spent on STEM activities positively contributed to their academic performance (**Figure 4**). Teachers highlighted the



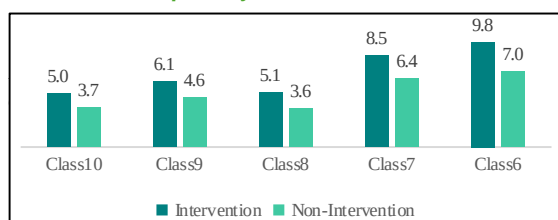
effective use of Mini Science Centres, science kits, and smart classrooms in improving conceptual understanding, especially for weaker students. *"Science models help weak students also to understand easily," shared one teacher. The training provided also empowered teachers to regularly use STEM tools, which were previously underutilized.* In contrast, non-intervention school teachers expressed *challenges due to the lack of teaching aids, hands-on materials, and training, often relying on*

Figure 4: Do you think the time spent on the STEM program activities was used well and is helpful for your studies (N=285)



rote learning methods. One teacher noted, “Without visuals, students just memorize; they don’t really understand.”

Impact: The STEM program has had a transformative impact on students’ attitudes and aspirations. 81.1% of students reported a positive shift in how they perceive science, technology, engineering, and math, while 91.2% stated that the program influenced their interest in pursuing STEM careers (**Figure 5**). Hands-on learning and smart classrooms fostered curiosity, deeper understanding, and visible improvement among weaker students. Teachers observed students becoming more inquisitive, with one remarking, *“After seeing smart classes, students feel they can become scientists.”* Parents



also reported increased interest and enthusiasm at home. In contrast, non-intervention schoolteachers recognized

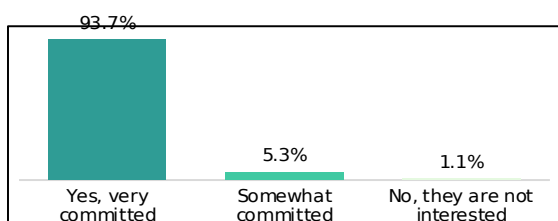


the **potential long-term impact of STEM programs** and expressed a strong need for infrastructure and exposure, emphasizing that such tools could significantly boost comprehension, confidence, and parental involvement.

Sustainability: The STEM program shows strong potential for long-term sustainability. 93.3% of students expressed a desire for the program to continue, and 100% believed the skills they learned would support their future

Figure 6: Are your teachers and school staff committed to continuing STEM activities? (N=285)

careers. Additionally, 93.7% affirmed that their teachers and school staff were committed to sustaining STEM activities, reflecting deep institutional ownership (**Figure 6**). Teachers shared that they now independently conduct sessions using STEM materials, and School Management Committees (SMCs) are proactively planning to continue science exhibitions and lab activities. *“Even without external help, now we can take sessions using these materials,”* shared a teacher. *Encouragement from block officials and student interest in maintaining models*



further demonstrate momentum for lasting impact beyond the intervention period.

STEM learning Outcomes and Contribution of STEM activities in overall learning outcomes: Students in intervention schools consistently outperformed their peers in non-intervention schools across all grades. The **Figure 7: Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of grades 6-10th**

learning gap was especially evident in lower grades—Class 6 and 7 students scored 2 to 3 points higher, highlighting the strong impact of early STEM exposure on foundational learning. Even in higher classes, intervention students maintain a clear advantage, reinforcing the value of sustained hands-on STEM engagement (**Figure 7**). Of all the Learning Materials used for the STEM classes, digital learning content (videos, simulations) has contributed the most to the STEM correct learning outcomes (6.5 out of 10) (**Figure 8**).

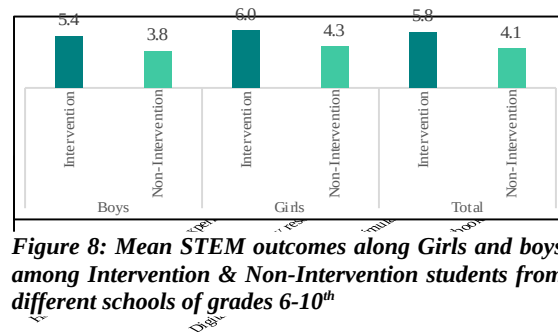


Figure 8: Mean STEM outcomes along Girls and boys among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of grades 6-10th

Figure 9: Contribution of different STEM activities in STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention students from different schools of all grades (N=285)

Recommendations for Sustainability and Scale-Up

To ensure long-term impact and ownership of the STEM intervention, the following strategies are recommended:

Institutionalize Monitoring: Integrate intervention tracking into the routine responsibilities of Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs), equipping them to support data collection, remedial planning, and teacher mentoring.

Strengthen Local Ownership: Empower School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) to allocate minimal budgets for lab upkeep and provide user-friendly checklists to School Management Committees (SMCs) for ongoing reviews.

Build Community Engagement: Design structured engagement sessions with parents and local stakeholders to sustain interest and support for STEM activities.

Ensure Continuity of Learning: Promote peer learning among trained teachers and initiate remedial classes for weaker students to maintain learning gains.

Support Career Pathways: Introduce targeted sessions for Class 10 and 12 students to explore STEM career options.



Enable Smooth Transition: Conduct formal handovers with transition meetings and distribute documentation kits with baseline data, intervention plans, and monitoring tools to schools and clusters.



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India

IMPACT EVALUATION OF STEM PROGRAM IN RAICHUR, KARNATAKA



Prepared By
DevInsights

Prepared for
ChildFund India

Table of Contents

Tables & Figures -----	4
Acknowledgements -----	7
List of Abbreviations -----	8
Executive Summary -----	9
Chapter 1. Introduction -----	12
1.1 Background -----	12
1.2 Overview of ChildFund India STEM Education Program -----	14
1.3 Objectives of the Evaluation -----	14
1.4 Project location -----	14
Chapter 2. Approach and Methodology -----	16
2.1 Evaluation approach and methodology -----	16
2.2 Sampling Design -----	17
2.3 Sampling frame and Size -----	18
2.3 Selection of Sample -----	18
2.4 Training, Pilot testing, and data collection -----	20
2.5 Consent and confidentiality -----	20
2.6 Risks and Mitigation -----	21
2.7 Analysis Approach -----	21
2.8 Statistical Analysis -----	21
Chapter 3 Key Findings -----	23
3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents -----	23
3.2 Availability of STEM Infrastructure & Resources -----	25
3.3 Evaluation Based on OECD-DAC Criteria -----	28
Relevance -----	29
Coherence -----	30
Effectiveness -----	31
Efficiency -----	32
Impact -----	33
Sustainability -----	34
3.4 STEM Learning Outcomes -----	35
STEM Learning Outcomes for Grade 10 th -----	36
STEM Learning Outcomes for Grade 9 th -----	38
STEM Learning Outcomes for Grade 8 th -----	39
STEM Learning Outcomes for Grade 7 th -----	41
STEM Learning Outcomes for Grade 6 th -----	41

3.5 Suggestions and Improvements	43
Chapter 4	46
Conclusion and Recommendations	46
Conclusion	46
Recommendations: The Path Forward	47
References	51
Annexures	52

Figure 3. 21: Percentage distribution of STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 10th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	36
Figure 3. 22: Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 10th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	36
Figure 3. 23: Mean predicted probabilities of STEM Learning Outcome among students in Intervention & Non-Intervention schools for grade 10th, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	37
Figure 3. 24: Percentage Distribution of STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 9th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	38
Figure 3.25: Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 9th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	38
Figure 3. 26: Mean predicted probabilities of STEM Learning Outcome among students in Intervention & Non-Intervention schools for grade 9th, Devadurga, Raichur, Karnataka, 2025 ..	39
Figure 3. 27: Percentage Distribution of Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 8th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	39
Figure 3. 28: Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 8th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	40
Figure 3. 29: Mean predicted probabilities of STEM Learning Outcome among students in Intervention & Non-Intervention schools for grade 7th, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	40
Figure 3. 30: Percentage distribution of STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 7th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	41
Figure 3. 31: Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 7th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	41
Figure 3. 32: Percentage distribution of STEM learning Outcomes among Intervention and non-intervention students from different schools of 6th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	41
Figure 3. 33: Mean STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention & Non-Intervention students from different schools of 6th grade, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	42
Figure 3. 34: Contribution of different STEM activities in STEM Learning Outcome among Intervention students from different schools of all grades, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	42
Figure 3. 35: Percentage distribution of students in the intervention schools by their rating in overall satisfaction with STEM Program, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	43
Figure 3. 36: Percentage distribution of students in the intervention schools by the components they enjoyed the most in the STEM Program, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	43
Figure 3. 37: Percentage distribution of students in the intervention schools by the components they enjoyed the most in the STEM Program, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025.....	43
Figure 3. 38: Percentage distribution of intervention students by the need for STEM improvements, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025 (N=258)	44
Table 2. 1: List of sampled Intervention schools -----	19
Table 2. 2: List of sampled Non-Intervention schools -----	19
Table 2. 3: Qualitative sample for intervention and non-intervention schools-----	20

Table 3. 1: Multiple Regression analysis of STEM Learning Outcome among students of class 10th, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	37
Table 3. 2: Multiple Regression analysis of STEM Learning Outcome among 9th grade Students, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	38
Table 3. 3: Multiple Regression analysis of STEM Learning Outcome among 8th grade students, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	40
Table 3. 4: Multiple Regression analysis of Learning Materials used for the STEM classes by STEM learning outcomes among all Grades, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	42
Annexure 1. 1: Correlation matrix of Socio-Demographic background and type of School of students of Grades 10th- 8th, Devadurga block, Raichur, Karnataka, India, 2025	52
Annexure 1. 2: QUANTITATIVE TOOL	52
Annexure 1. 3: PARENTS/GAURDIAN FGD GUIDE	68
Annexure 1. 4: PRINCIPAL IDI GUIDE	72
Annexure 1. 5: SMC MEMBER IDI GUIDE	77
Annexure 1. 6: Non-Intervention Teacher IDI Guide	81
Annexure 1. 7: TEACHERS IDI GUIDE	84

Impact: The program has impacted the students in enhancing their learning process and generating an interest in education and has career aspirations. While interacting with one of the teachers at a school, it was found that *“One of the girl students told her aspirations to become a Scientist to her teacher. Earlier, she didn’t like Science, but now, due to a better learning technique used by teachers. Her interest has shifted, and she wants to continue studying Science. While with an interaction with a parent, it was found that “Earlier Science was boring for my daughter, but now, she remains excited, curious, and discusses whatever is taught in class with me”*. Such a parent-child interaction will inform parents about their child’s willingness regarding their future career aspirations.

Sustainability: The program has shown evidence of sustainability. In an interview with a teacher, it was found that, *“STEM activities will continue, as students are also taking an interest in maintaining STEM lab and models are constructed by leftover materials”*, making these activities have an equal participation of teachers and students. The same is confirmed by the Block officer that, *“Support will be provided to STEM activities in the form of assured support for Science model fairs and competitions”*.

Key Learning Outcomes: The STEM program significantly boosts learning outcomes, with intervention schools consistently outperforming non-intervention schools. In Grade 10, intervention students averaged 5.0 out of 10 compared to 3.7, while similar gains were observed in all other Grades. Notably, girls in intervention schools outperformed boys by up to 1.4 points across all grades, driven by **interactive pedagogy, hands-on STEM kits, smart classrooms, and increased teacher encouragement**, which enabled girls to overcome earlier hesitations and actively participate. Teachers observed that even previously **low-performing students showed greater curiosity and conceptual understanding when STEM concepts were taught using practical models and digital aids**. These findings validate the program’s success in transforming STEM learning, especially for marginalized students, and highlight its potential as a high-impact model for investment in education equity. Of all the Learning materials used by the intervention school, Digital learning content (videos, simulations) has the most significant impact on the STEM learning outcomes among students of all grades.

Recommendations

1. Continuously monitor and evaluate the progress of students on learning outcomes. Targeted efforts through remedial classes for weak students can improve the overall learning levels of students.
2. Cross-learning sessions from teachers at other schools can help all the trained teachers in the better facilitation of STEM sessions at schools for students.
3. Designing a structured community engagement session for parents and community stakeholders to target better community engagement for the program.
4. Facilitate sessions on career pathways to help students navigate STEM-related careers for students in grades 10 and 12.
5. Target SDMC meetings and members to get a minimum budget allocation for STEM lab-related activities and their maintenance that will ensure the sustainability of STEM labs.

6. Integrate the intervention monitoring tasks into the regular responsibilities of Cluster Resource Persons, and ensure CRPs are trained to support schools in data collection, remedial planning, and teacher mentoring as per project learnings.
7. Develop user-friendly guides/checklists for SMC members to continue periodic reviews post-project.
8. Prepare and hand over a documentation kit to each school/cluster that includes baseline data, intervention plans, learnings, and tools for future monitoring.
9. Facilitate a transition meeting at the cluster level involving CRPs, SMCs, headteachers, and project teams to formalize responsibilities and co-create a simple timeline with review points (e.g., quarterly follow-ups by CRPs, bi-annual SMC reviews).

The STEM program run by ChildFund India in Devadurga has shown itself to be effective, fair, and expandable. This model can be used as a model for STEM education in other underprivileged areas of India with focused investments and system-level adoption.

gender divide requires targeted interventions that foster inclusive environments and offer early exposure to engaging, hands-on STEM experiences. (Amirtham S & Kumar, 2021).

ChildFund India launched its STEM Education Program in selected government schools across Raichur district, Karnataka, as part of its broader commitment to enhancing science and technology education in rural and underserved regions. This project expands on the lessons learnt by the organisation in Jharkhand, Odisha, and Rajasthan, where block education departments first worked with the organisation to pilot integrated science and digital learning models. The lessons and experiences drawn from these states laid a strong foundation for adapting and scaling the program in the socio-economically marginalized contexts of southern India, particularly Raichur (ChildFund, 2023).

The STEM intervention in Raichur was designed with the primary objective of improving students' engagement and conceptual understanding in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Central to this approach was the enhancement of teaching quality through capacity-building initiatives that promoted inquiry-based pedagogy and hands-on learning. The initiative included activity-based learning kits, virtual classrooms, and STEM labs to encourage experiential learning. By doing this, it aimed to develop in students the crucial 21st-century abilities of critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication.

The main emphasis was on gender responsiveness and the active participation of all students to promote a more equitable and sustainable form of STEM education. The initiative connected classroom innovations with community-based support from parents, teachers, and School Management Committees (SMCs). The intervention also reflects continuity with ChildFund India's previous efforts, notably its **"Tech-Based Learning in Rural Schools"** initiative in Madhya Pradesh, which aimed to bridge the digital and educational divide in remote areas. Insights from that initiative informed the design of a scalable, context-responsive STEM model in Raichur.

This study evaluates the impact of the STEM education program on students' interest, comprehension, and enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects. It further examines the changes in teaching methods and how much the intervention has improved students' critical thinking, creativity, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. The evidence generated from this evaluation provides a basis for refining future programming and assessing scalability in comparable low-resource settings across India.

Raichur district in Karnataka, with a 2011 population of approximately 1.93 million, is mainly rural, with about 75% residing in villages and a balanced sex ratio of 1000 females per 1000 males. The district has a moderate population density of 228 persons per square kilometer and a significant presence of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Literacy in Raichur is relatively low at 59.56%, with a notable gender gap: male literacy at 70.47% contrasts sharply with female literacy at 48.73% (Census of India, 2011). Rural areas, where most of the population resides, have even lower literacy rates than urban centres. Educational attainment challenges are compounded by rising dropout rates at higher grades and limited school infrastructure and resources. Despite these challenges, efforts including establishing Kendriya Vidyalayas with ICT facilities and participating in district-wide science fairs foster budding interest in STEM subjects among students.

Devadurga block, part of Raichur district, exemplifies similar but accentuated educational and demographic challenges. With a population of around 310,000 and a nearly equal male-female distribution, Devadurga's literacy rate is among the lowest in the district, with female literacy particularly deficient. Urban areas within Devadurga show relatively better literacy rates, but rural parts lag. STEM education in Devadurga faces major obstacles such as shortages of qualified teachers, inadequate STEM labs, and limited technology integration. While some government schools are improving through infrastructure upgrades backed by community and corporate initiatives, sustained efforts are needed to enhance STEM pedagogy and resources. Raichur and Devadurga reflect the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve literacy and STEM education, enabling socio-economic growth and empowering youth for future opportunities.

isolate the program's effects. Due to sample size constraints in the lower grades, this targeted subset was selected. Important covariates, such as mother's occupation, father's level of education, and student age, were considered by the models. Following regression, a predicted probability approach was employed to estimate and compare STEM learning outcomes of girls and boys between intervention and non-intervention schools.

All statistical findings were reported with 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs) to ensure robustness and comparability.

Qualitative analysis

The qualitative data explores various aspects of the effectiveness of STEM education and provides recommendations for scale-up and improvement. Every audio recording has been translated into English. To preserve participant privacy and data integrity, strict confidentiality protocols were adhered to during data backup and storage. Combining deductive and inductive methods, the analysis takes a thematic approach. While the inductive method finds new patterns and themes in the data, the deductive analysis is guided by predetermined themes that are derived from the research objectives. Thematic analysis was conducted using AtlasTi 25.0.

Case Story 2 – Mahadevi, Class 9, Sunkeshwarahal Government High School

Mahadevi, a 15-year-old student from the remote village of Sunkeshwarahal in Raichur, comes from a family of agricultural laborers. With both parents engaged in daily wage work and no prior exposure to science beyond textbooks, Mahadevi had never imagined that she could enjoy, let alone excel in, a subject like science.

That changed with ChildFund India’s STEM intervention in her school. Equipped with new science kits, models, and access to a functional STEM lab, Mahadevi began exploring topics like robotics, human anatomy, and natural disasters through hands-on learning. (“Pehle toh interest nahi tha. Ab jab dekhte hain, haath lagate hain, tab samajh aata hai aur maza bhi aata hai.”)

She fondly recalls participating in a natural disaster drawing competition, where she applied her STEM learning to illustrate the effects of climate change and floods. Even though she didn’t win, it was the first time she had used digital references and drawn with purpose. (“Mobile mein dekhke drawing banayi thi. Pehle kabhi aisa nahi kiya tha.”)

What stood out was her fascination with robotics—a topic she had never heard of before the program. Now, she can explain the basics of light reflection and circuits, and dreams of one day joining the police force—not just as a job, but as someone who understands the science behind safety and technology. (“Light kaise hota hai, wo dekh kar samjha. Ab police banna hai, lekin science ke saath.”)

Action: Formalize the excellent STEM pedagogy training and partner with district educational bodies to weave it into the standard in-service development framework for all teachers.

Why it Matters: Teachers are the heart of this program's success. A structured, continuous training program will ensure their skills and enthusiasm remain a driving force for years to come. This training must focus on practical ways to merge hands-on learning with the curriculum, easing teachers' concerns about completing the syllabus, particularly in the pressure-filled exam years.

3. Navigating the Crucial Years: Tailored Support for Grades 9 and 10

Action: Design and deliver specialized STEM kits and digital resources specifically for the 9th and 10th-grade curriculum. Collaborate with school leaders to create more flexible timetables that protect time for practical, hands-on learning.

Why it Matters: The intense focus on board exams in higher grades often pushes experiential learning to the side. This is a critical loss of opportunity. By providing targeted resources and administrative support, we can help older students continue to engage with STEM in a meaningful way, ensuring their curiosity doesn't fade when it matters most.

4. The Power of Partnership: Engaging Families to Uplift Students

Action: Deepen and expand initiatives that bring parents into the school community, particularly mothers, through School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) and student-led science exhibitions.

Why it Matters: The data tells a powerful story: when mothers get involved, their daughters, in particular, gain confidence and excel in STEM. Scaling these community engagement efforts will amplify this positive trend, creating a strong, supportive ecosystem around every student.

5. Protecting the Investment: A Practical Plan for Long-Term Success

Action: Implement a simple, school-based system for monitoring the condition and use of all STEM equipment. This could involve appointing a "School STEM Coordinator" or making it part of an existing teacher's role.

Why it Matters: These valuable resources are the engine of the program. To ensure they continue to benefit students for years to come, we need a clear plan for their care and maintenance. This practical step is essential for the program's long-term efficiency and sustainability.

6. Beyond the Classroom Walls: Sparking Curiosity Through Real-World Science

Action: Introduce inspiring new activities like inter-school science fairs, visits to local industries, and STEM competitions.

Why it Matters: Such events transform learning from a classroom exercise into a real-world adventure. They give students a tangible connection to their future aspirations, foster healthy competition and peer learning, and ignite a passion for innovation that will last a lifetime.

7. Capacity Building of SMC Members

Action: Identify and train select SMC members on key aspects of the intervention, such as monitoring learning outcomes, facilitating community engagement, and overseeing basic school improvement activities.

Why it Matters: School Management Committees (SMCs) are critical to sustaining educational interventions at the grassroots. However, their potential remains underutilized due to limited awareness and capacity. By equipping select SMC members with foundational skills in monitoring learning outcomes, promoting community engagement, and supporting school improvement, schools can develop local leadership and accountability mechanisms that outlast external projects.

8. User-Friendly Guides

Action: Develop user-friendly guides/checklists for SMC members to continue periodic reviews post-project.

Why it Matters: SMC members often lack access to clear, actionable tools to guide their oversight functions. Simple, easy-to-follow guides and checklists will empower them to make timely decisions, track progress, and hold schools accountable. These tools also help demystify data and processes for laypersons, ensuring continuity even when trained individuals rotate out.

9. Formal Role Allocation to CRPs

Action: Integrate the intervention monitoring tasks into the regular responsibilities of Cluster Resource Persons, and ensure CRPs are trained to support schools in data collection, remedial planning, and teacher mentoring as per project learnings.

Why it Matters: Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) serve as a key institutional touchpoint between schools and the education department. Integrating intervention monitoring into their formal responsibilities not only institutionalizes the program's learnings but also ensures consistent mentoring support, data-based planning, and instructional improvement across schools. This alignment builds systemic ownership and reduces dependency on external support.

10. Joint Transition Plans:

Action: Facilitate a transition meeting at the cluster level involving CRPs, SMCs, headteachers, and project teams to formalize responsibilities and co-create a simple timeline with review points (e.g., quarterly follow-ups by CRPs, bi-annual SMC reviews).

Why it Matters: Transitions between externally supported projects and government systems often result in discontinuity unless responsibilities are clearly transferred. A joint transition plan ensures collective buy-in, promotes shared accountability, and creates a structured timeline for follow-up. Involving CRPs, SMCs, and headteachers in a formal handover allows for smoother integration of practices into the existing school governance system.

11. From a Successful Project to a Sustainable Legacy: Weaving STEM into the Fabric of Education

B. General Information			
B1.	Interviewer's name	1. ☐ 2. ☐ <i>(Name list of enumerators will be added)</i>	Single Select
B2.	Date	DD/MM/YYYY	
B3.	Time of start of interview		
B4.	Name of the Student		
B5.	Grade	1. Grade 10 2. Grade 9 3. Grade 8 4. Grade 7 5. Grade 6	Section F is to Be Synced with Grade Selected here
B6.	Gender	1. Girls 2. Boys	
B7.	Age	1. Less than 10 years 2. 10 years 3. 11 years 4. 12 years 5. 13 years 6. 14 years 7. 15 years 8. 16 years 9. More than 16 years	Single Select
B8.	Fathers Name	Open Ended	
B9.	Father's Education	1. Illiterate (No formal education) 2. Primary (Up to Class 5) 3. Middle School (Class 6-8) 4. Secondary (Class 9-10) 5. Higher Secondary (Class 11-12) 6. Diploma / Vocational Course 7. Graduate (bachelor's degree) 8. Postgraduate (master's degree) 9. PhD / Doctorate 10. Not sure	Single Select

		11. Not Applicable	
B10.	Father's Occupation	Father's Occupation: 1. Farmer 2. Daily Wage Laborer 3. Government Employee 4. Private Sector Employee 5. Business Owner / Self-Employed 6. Shopkeeper 7. Driving 8. Teacher / Professor 9. Engineer / Doctor / Lawyer 10. Unemployed 11. Other 12. Not Applicable	Single Select
B11.	Mother's Occupation	Mother's Occupation: 1. Homemaker 2. Daily Wage Laborer 3. Government Employee 4. Private Sector Employee 5. Business Owner / Self-Employed 6. Shopkeeper 7. Teacher / Professor 8. Engineer / Doctor / Lawyer 9. Other 10. Not Applicable	Single Select
B12.	Name of the School	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12.	Single Select

		13. 14. Schools Name to be Added from list	
B13.	Intervention School	1.Yes 2. No	If No is selected, then skip directly then Q C1, C2, C3 and then whole Section F Class wise
Section C: Availability of STEM Infrastructure & Resources			
Only for Intervention Schools			
C1.	Does your school have the following STEM-related facilities? Provided by Chidfund?	1.STEM Mini Science Centre 2.STEM Learning Centre / STEM Library 3.SMART Classroom with digital learning tools 4.None of the Above	Multiple Select For Both Intervention and Non-Intervention School This question also opens when there is option No Selected for B6.
C2.	What Kind of help you need for better understanding of Science and Maths in your School Only for Non-Intervention School	1. Science Lab 2. Computer Lab 3. Smartclassroom 4. More teachers 5. Dedicated Time for this	Only when B6 answer is No
C3.	what kind of career you want to Pursue in future	1. Computer IT / Software 2. Astronomy 3. Robotics 4. Scientists 5. Doctor 6. Lawyer 7. Engineer 8. Teacher 9. Any Other	Opens for both when B6 option is Yes and No both
C4.	How often do you use the STEM Lab in a week?	1.Daily 2.3-4 times a week 3.1-2 times a week 4.Rarely 5.Never	Single Select
C5.	Do you have access to STEM books and resources in your school library?	1.Yes, and I frequently use them 2.Yes, but I rarely use them	Single Select

		3.No, my school does not have STEM books 4.I am not aware of such resources	
C6.	How often do you attend classes in the SMART Classroom?	1.Daily 2.3-4 times a week 3.1-2 times a week 4.Rarely 5.Never	Single Select
C7.	What learning materials do you use in your STEM classes?	1. Hands-on STEM models and experiments 2. STEM books and library resources 3. Digital learning content (videos, simulations) 4. Traditional textbooks only 5.No materials are used	Multiple Select
C8.	Do you enjoy the STEM related interventions at your school?	1. Yes, I enjoy them a lot. 2. Yes, But not too much 3. They are okay, but I don't enjoy them much. 4. No, I don't enjoy them at all. 5. I am not sure / Can't Say.	Single Select
C9	Have you developed interest in STEM after participating in this program and want to pursue a career in STEM now?	1. Yes, I really enjoy STEM and want a career in it. 2. Yes, I find STEM more interesting, but I'm unsure about a career. 3. No, my interest in STEM has stayed the same. 4. I'm not sure / I haven't thought about it yet.	Single Select

Section D: Evaluation Based on OECD-DAC Criteria

RELEVANCE

D1.	Do you find STEM subjects more interesting with the new infrastructure and resources?	1.Yes, very much 2.Somewhat 3.Not really 4.No, not at all	
-----	---	--	--

D2.	Did the program make you more curious about science, technology, engineering, or math?	1. Yes, I am much more curious and excited to learn about STEM. 2. Yes, I am a little more interested than before. 3. No, my interest in STEM is the same as before. 4. No, I am not interested in STEM. 5. I am not sure.	Single Select
D3.	How different is this learning approach from your previous classroom experience? (Probe after using Smart classroom/ STEM Lab)	1. Very different. 2. Somewhat different 3. Not very different 4. No difference 5. I am not sure	Single Select
COHERENCE			
D4.	Do you think STEM education in your school aligns with what is taught in your regular subjects?	1. Yes, completely 2. Somewhat 3. No, it feels separate 4. I don't know	Single Select
D5.	Do your teachers integrate STEM activities into your regular classes?	1. Yes, frequently 2. Sometimes 3. Rarely 4. No, never	Single Select
D6.	Do your teachers encourage using STEM resources like labs and digital boards in class?	1. Yes used regularly 2. Used Sometimes 3. Used Occasionally 4. Not used at All 5. My School don't have anything like this	Single Select
EFFECTIVENESS			
D7.	Since the STEM program started, how confident do you feel in Science and Math?		

		1. Much more confident 2. Somewhat more confident 3. No change 4. Less confident	
D8.	Did the teachers teach STEM differently because of the program? If so, how?	1. They Use more practical Ways of teaching 2. Now concepts are more clearly understood 3. Using Models teaching became more interactive 4. No major changes same as before	Single Select
EFFICIENCY			
D9.	Do you think the time spent on the STEM program activities was used well? and is helpful for your studies	1. Very easy 2. Somewhat easy 3. Difficult 4. Very difficult	Single Select
D10.	Are the STEM resources (labs, books, digital content) well-maintained and functional?	1. Yes, always 2. Sometimes 3. No, they are often not working 4. I don't know	Single Select
Impact			
D11.	Has the STEM program changed how you feel about science, technology, engineering, or math? Like these are very tough subjects	1. Yes, significantly 2. Somewhat 3. No noticeable change 4. No, it has become harder	Single Select
D12.	Has the STEM program influenced your career aspirations?	1. Yes, I am more interested in STEM careers now 2. Maybe, I am considering STEM	

		3. No, my career choice is unchanged 4. I don't know	
Sustainability			
D13	Do you think STEM activities in your school will continue in the future. If Childfund India exit after few years ?	1. Yes, definitely 2. Maybe 3. No, it will stop after the project ends 4. I don't know	Single Select
D14	Do you think what you learned in the STEM program will be useful for you in your future studies or even a job?	1. Yes 2. No	Single Select
D15	Are your teachers and school staff committed to continuing STEM activities?	1. Yes, very committed 2. Somewhat committed 3. Not very committed 4. No, they are not interested	Single Select

E. Suggestion & Improvements			
E1.	How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the STEM Project?	1. Highly Satisfied 2. Satisfied 3. Neutral 4. Dissatisfied	
E2.	What components of STEM program you like the most and why?	1. Science lab activities 2. Digital boards and smart classrooms 3. STEM kits and models 5. Computer lab 6. Workshops and competitions 7. Exposure visits 8. None of these 9. Not Applicable	
		1. Excellent	

E3.	How do you rank the interventions done by Childfund India in your school	2. Good 3. Average 4. Not very useful 5. I don't know much about these.	
E4.	What Else do you need for STEM improvements	1. More science lab equipment and experiments. 2. More computers and better internet access. 3. More digital boards and smart classrooms. 4. More interactive workshops and competitions. 5. More visits to science museums and industries. 6. More support from teachers in using STEM resources. 7. Can't Say/ Don't Know	

Section F STEM Learning Outcome Grade 10

E1.	Which part of the human brain controls involuntary actions such as heartbeat and breathing?	1. Cerebrum 2. Cerebellum 3. Medulla Oblongata 4. Hypothalamus	Answer is 3 Medulla Oblongata
E2.	Which of the following is an example of an exothermic reaction in living organisms	1. Photosynthesis 2. Respiration 3. Protein synthesis 4. DNA replication	Answer is 2 Respiration

E3.	A convex lens is used to form an image on a screen. If the image is inverted and of the same size as the object, where is the object placed	1. At infinity 2. At the focus of the lens 3. At twice the focal length 4. Between the focal point and optical center	Answer is 3 At twice the focal length
E4.	If a 10 N force is applied to a 2 kg object, what will its acceleration be? (Newton's Second Law: $F = m \times a$)	1. 2 m/s² 2. 5 m/s² 3. 10 m/s² 4. 20 m/s²	Answer is 2. 5 m/s²
E5.	Which of the following metals does NOT react with dilute hydrochloric acid?	1. Zinc 2. Magnesium 3. Copper 4. Aluminium	Answer is 3 Copper
E6.	What is the pH value of a neutral solution at room temperature?	1. 0 2. 7 3. 14 4. 10	Answer is 2 7
E7.	If the speed of a train is doubled, how will the time taken to cross a bridge change?	1. It will become half 2. It will double 3. It will remain the same 4. D) It will become one-fourth	Answer is 1. It will become half
E8.	If more workers are assigned to a task, how does the time required to complete it change?	1. Increase 2. Decrease 3. Remains the same 4. No effect	Answer is 2 Decreases
E9.	If the radius of a cylinder is doubled but the height remains the same, how will the volume change?	1. It will become double 2. It will become four times 3. It will remain the same 4. It will become half	Answer is 2 It will become four times

E.10	At what time between 2:00 and 3:00 do the hour and minute hands of a clock overlap?	1. 2:30 2. 2:40 3. 2:50 4. 2:55	Answer is 2 2:40
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Section F STEM Learning Outcome Grade 9

E1.	Which organelle is known as the "Powerhouse of the Cell" because it produces energy?	1. Nucleus 2. Ribosome 3. Mitochondria 4. Golgi Apparatus	Answer: 3. Mitochondria
E2.	Which plant tissue is responsible for transporting water from roots to other parts of the plant?	1. Phloem 2. Xylem 3. Parenchyma 4. Collenchyma	Answer is 2 Xylem
E3.	What happens to the kinetic energy of particles when a solid is heated?	1. Increases 2. Decreases 3. Remains the same 4. First increases, then decreases	Answer is 1. Increases
E4.	Which of the following statements is true about atoms?	1. Atoms are always visible under a microscope 2. Atoms can be divided into smaller particles while keeping chemical properties 3. Atoms combine to form molecules 4. Atoms do not have any mass	Answer is 3. Atoms combine to form molecules
E5.	Which of Newton's Laws explains why passengers fall forward when a moving bus stops suddenly?	1. First Law 2. Second Law 3. Third Law	Answer 1 First law

		4. None of the above	
E6.	Why does travel sound fastest in solids?	1. Solids have more air gaps 2. Particles in solids are closely packed 3. Solids do not conduct sound 4. Sound needs air to travel	Answer is 2 Particles in solids are closely packed
E7.	Which of the following numbers is irrational	1. 3.5 2. $4/7\sqrt{2}$ 3. $\sqrt{2}$ 4. 0.75	Answer is 3 $\sqrt{2}$
E8.	If a polynomial has a degree of 2, what type of polynomial is it?	1. Linear 2. Quadratic 3. Cubic 4. Constant	Answer is 2 Quadratic
E9.	If the radius of a sphere is doubled, how does its volume change?	1. It double 2. It becomes four times 3. It becomes eight times 4. It remains the same	Answer is 3 It becomes eight times
E10.	The sum of the angles in a triangle is always	1. 90 2. 120 3. 180 4. 360	Answer is 3 180

Section F STEM Learning Outcome Grade 8

E1.	Which organ in the human body produces bile, which helps in digestion?	1. Stomach 2. Liver 3. Pancreas 4. Small Intestine	Answer is 2) Liver
E2.	What is the function of stomata in plants?	1. Transport of	

		food 2. Absorption of nutrients 3. Exchange of gases 4. Providing support to the plant	Answer is 1 Exchange of gases
E3.	Which of the following is an example of physical change?	1. Rusting of iron 2. Burning of wood 3. Melting of ice 4. Digestion of food	Answer is 3 Melting of ice
E4.	Which gas is released when metal reacts with an acid?	1. Oxygen 2. Carbon dioxide 3. Hydrogen 4. Nitrogen	Answer is 3 Hydrogen
E5.	What type of energy does a stretched rubber band have?	1. Kinetic energy 2. Chemical energy 3. Potential energy 4. Heat energy	Answer is 3 Potential Energy
E6.	What is the main reason for friction between two surfaces?	1. Gravitational force 2. Smoothness of surfaces 3. Roughness of surfaces 4. Magnetic force	Answer is 3 Roughness of Surfaces
E7.	Which of the following is an example of a rational number?	1. $\sqrt{3}$ 2. 0.25 3. π 4. 4. 5. $1/0$	Answer is 2. 0.25
E8.	The value of $(-7) + 9$ is?	1. -16 2. 16 3. 2	Answer is 3. (2)

		4. -2	
E9.	If a square has a side length of 5 cm, what is its perimeter?	1. 10 cm 2. 15 cm 3. 20 cm 4. 25 cm	1. 20 cm Answer is 3 20 cm
E10.	What is the reciprocal of $\frac{3}{5}$?	1. $\frac{1.5}{3}$ 2. $\frac{2.3}{5}$ 3. $\frac{3.1}{3}$ 4. $\frac{4.1}{5}$	Answer is 1 $\frac{5}{3}$

Section F STEM Learning Outcome Grade 7

E1.	Which part of the plant is responsible for absorbing water from the soil?	1. Stem 2. Leaves 3. Roots 4. Flowers	Answer is 3 Roots
E2.	Which of the following is an example of a herbivore?	1. Tiger 2. Dog 3. Cow 4. Crow	Answer is 3 Cow
E3.	Which among the following is a non-metal?	1. Copper 2. Sulfur 3. Iron 4. Aluminium	Answer is 2 Sulfur
E4.	Which of these is a good conductor of electricity?	1. Wood 2. Plastic 3. Copper 4. Rubber	Answer is 3 Copper
E5.	What is the standard unit of speed in the metric system	1. Kilometre per hour (km/h) 2. Meter per second (m/s) 3. Centimetre per second (cm/s) 4. Miles per hour (mph)	Answer is 2 Meter per second (m/s)

E6.	Which type of simple machine is a seesaw?	1. Pulley 2. Lever 3. Wedge 4. Screw	Answer: 2 Lever
E7.	Which of the following is a prime number?	1. 12 2. 15 3. 19 4. 20	Answer is 3 19
E8.	If the cost of 5 pens is ₹50, what is the cost of 1 pen?	1. ₹5 2. ₹10 3. ₹15 4. ₹20	Answer is 2 ₹10
E9.	Which of the following is a fraction in simplest form?	1. 8/12 2. 15/25 3. 7/9 4. 10/20	Answer is 3 7/9
E10.	A triangle with all sides of different lengths is called:	1. Equilateral 2. Isosceles 3. Scalene 4. Right-angled	Answer is 3 Scalene

Section F STEM Learning Outcome Grade 6

E1.	Which part of the plant makes food?	1. Roots 2. Stem 3. Leaves 4. Flowers	Answer is 3 Leaves
E2.	Which of the following animal's lays eggs?	1. Cow 2. Dog 3. Hen 4. Cat	Answer is 3 Hen
E3.	Which of these is a liquid at room temperature	1. Ice 2. Water 3. Iron 4. Salt	Answer is 2 Water
E4.	Which of these is a source of light?	1. Moon 2. Firefly	

		3. Mirror 4. Glass	Answer is 2 Firefly
E5.	Which of the following materials is the best conductor of electricity?	1. Plastic 2. Wood 3. Copper 4. Paper	Answer is 3 Copper
E6.	What is the main force that pulls objects toward the Earth?	1. Magnetism 2. Friction 3. Gravity 4. Electricity	Answer is 3 Gravity
E7.	Which of the following is an even number?	1. 13 2. 25 3. 32 4. 41	Answer is 3 32
E8.	If a pencil costs ₹5, what is the cost of 4 pencils?	1. ₹15 2. ₹20 3. ₹25 4. ₹30	Answer is ₹20
E9.	A rectangle has how many sides	1. 2 2. 3 3. 4 4. 5	Answer is 3 4
E10.	Which of the following is the smallest number?	1. 99 2. 101 3. 85 4. 120	Answer is 3 85

I, the undersigned, have understood the consent form above and am willingly agreeable to my participation in the study.

Signature of the respondent:

Name of the respondent:

Date:

I have accurately explained the above information sheet to the respondent. I also confirm that they were given an opportunity to ask questions about this study, and all the questions asked by him/her have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability.

Signature of the interviewer:

Name of the interviewer:

Date:

Contact Number of the interviewer:

(Note: One copy of this consent sheet is to be left with the respondent, and one copy should be filed with the researcher).

Parents/guardian FGD Tool

Participant Selection

The target group includes parents or guardians of students enrolled in participating schools, ensuring diversity in socioeconomic background, education level, and familiarity with STEM concepts. However, parents who are also teachers or directly involved in STEM interventions are excluded to maintain an unbiased perspective. And the size of the group will 8-12 participants.

Awareness about STEM and School Infrastructure

- 1. Have you ever heard the word STEM Education (use commonly use word in field) , What it is all about ? What does the term "STEM education" means? Do you ever attended any programme conducted in school where your children go?**

(Probes: Science and technology any other example that you know smart classroom built in school, anything shared by your children about science and technology course. Use local words for these.)

- 2. Are you aware that Childfund India has set up a Smart Classroom and Science Lab in the school to support students' learning? How did you come to know about this? What do you think about this development in the school?**

(Probes: Have your children ever shared with you about the presence of a TV, digital board, or science models in their school? Or did you come to know about them after visiting the school, attending an SMC meeting, or being informed by a community mobilizer about participating in a school event?)

Perceptions of STEM's Importance and Facilities development at school

- 3. Do you believe that Science is a promising subject for your child? What aspirations do you have for your child's future career? How much do you believe that technology will play a key role in the future?**

(Probes: What advantage you see in your child learning science subjects / do you think science will help in getting more better jobs for your child in future?)

- 4. Do you think that new facilities at school, helped in improving your child learning capabilities? they are now more interested in studying science and technology?**

(Probes: Do you find improvements in Grade of your children, are they became more regular in attending school as compared to earlier?)

Parental Involvement and Support

- 5. Do you help your child in Science and Technology-related homework or projects?**
(Probes: What difficulties do you face while assisting your child with these subjects? Do you feel there are any resources that could help you support them better?)
- 6. Have you attended any school-organized events or workshops related to Science and Technology, especially using the new facilities? If yes, what was your experience?**
(Probes: What made you attend these events? Did these events help you understand Science and Technology better? What suggestions do you have to make these events more useful for parents?)

School's Role in Promoting STEM

- 7. How well does the school inform parents about Science and Technology programs and opportunities, especially regarding the new facilities?**
(Probes: How you came to know about any programme, do you attend it regularly, what information's are shared in these programmer)
- 8. Are there any Science and Technology topics or skills you feel should be given more attention in the school curriculum, especially after the new facilities were introduced?**
(Probes: Do you think students should start learning computer, IT related courses at an early stage?)

Suggestions for Improvement

- 9. What is your overall satisfaction with the STEM Education Program implemented in your school by Childfund India India?**

(Probe : Is it worth implementing, not that much beneficial)

- 10. What types of workshops or informational sessions would you find beneficial to better understand STEM education and the new facilities**
- 11. Any Other Suggestions and Recommendations from your side to project implementation team**

2. School Name
3. Classes in School
4. Principal Since

B. Basic School and Infrastructure Information

1. **Total number of students enrolled in your school (Grades 6 to 10)? (Gender - wise)**
2. **What is the total number of students who attend school regularly? What is the average daily attendance at your school?**

(Probe: Have you observed any increase in student enrolment after the development of new infrastructure?)

3. **What infrastructural resources for STEM provided by Childfund India project? Please describe in detail.**

(Probe: Science Lab, Computer Lab, STEM Library, etc. Also mention the current condition, usability, and accessibility of these facilities)

4. **What is availability of infrastructure in your school before Childfund India support?**

(Probe: Do any other NGO / Government also supported for infrastructure development is the condition of school before Childfund India support)

5. **Do you have dedicated teachers for Science and Mathematics in your school?**

(Probe: If yes, please specify how many teachers are available for each subject)

6. **How many teachers in your school have received STEM-related training from Childfund India in last year? Do you think they are applying new teaching techniques in their daily classes after the training?**

(probe: Do you find changes in students' engagement after training and infrastructure development in your school)

7. **Is there any parent's sensitization programme conducted at your school regarding STEM promotions? Do you think that after project the parents and community are more aware about STEM related careers?**

(Probe: Details about the parents' engagements happened at school through Child fund)

8. **Could you share your observations regarding girls' participation in STEM activities and classes in your school?**

(Probe: Have there been specific efforts to encourage girls' involvement in STEM? How would you describe the enabling environment in your school for promoting girls' interest?)

9. **How confident do students in your school feel about Science and Math after the availability of STEM infrastructure and the training provided to teachers by Childfund India?**

(Probe: Is there any visible improvements shown by students as in improvement of grades or willingness to participate in science related activities)

C. OECD Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

1. **How relevant are the various STEM-related interventions—such as STEM infrastructure—to the learning needs and academic growth of your students, particularly in Science and Mathematics?**

(Probe STEM Lab, Smart classroom, Teachers Training)

2. **How well do the STEM education activities—including infrastructure improvements, teacher trainings, student workshops, and community engagement sessions—align with your school's broader academic curriculum, priorities, and education policies?**

(Probe: Are these activities complemented the school curriculum or are deviated from core school syllabus)

3. **Does the infrastructure development by Childfund India support your school's needs? For example, do you have enough classrooms to set up a Smart Classroom, Science Lab, and other facilities?**

(Probe: explore the building conditions at school, like boundary walls, water and electricity facilities)

Coherence

4. **Does the Childfund India STEM Education Program align with other educational programs, government schemes, and school initiatives running in your school?**
5. **How effectively are the STEM activities—such as teachers training, STEM classes, workshops integrated with your school's regular academic schedule and administrative processes?**

Effectiveness

6. **What changes have you noticed in students' interest and grade improvement in Science and Math after the Childfund India STEM Education Program started? Have you seen any changes in teaching methods, teacher confidence, or student involvement in STEM subjects?**

(Probe: Has the program made any impact on students' learning outcomes or their interest in choosing STEM-related careers?)

7. **How effectively are teachers and other stakeholders integrating the resources, training, and STEM-related initiatives—such as exposure visits, workshops, new infrastructure, and community engagement programs—into your school's teaching practices and educational objectives?**

(Probe: Are there noticeable changes in teaching methodologies, such as the use of hands-on experiments, technology, or collaborative strategies? How do you assess the impact of parent engagement sessions and community awareness programs?)

Efficiency

8. **How efficiently is the STEM infrastructure provided by Childfund India working in your school? Do you notice any quality issues? Are teachers and students using it regularly? *(Probe: Do you face any malfunctioning of smart Tv, and other support provided? Are they still working in good condition)***
9. **How well are the STEM program activities—like teacher training, workshops, student exposure visits, science fairs, and competitions—organized and implemented in your school?**

(Probe: Are the trainings conducted at suitable times and covering useful content?)

Impact

- 10. What long-term changes have you observed in students' learning, interests, and engagement and grade improvements after STEM project implementation?**

(Probe: Have their improvements in examination marks, participation, or interest in selection of STEM subjects as future career)

- 11. How have the trainings given to teachers improved their teaching methods and contributed to better learning outcomes for students?**

(Probe: Have you find that teachers changed their teaching approach after training or they are using same methods as they use it earlier)

Sustainability

- 12. Do you think the development done by Childfund India will continue even after their support ends? Does the school administration, district education committee, or school management committee show concern about sustaining these interventions?**

(Probe: Is the question of sustainability ever raised in any meeting by you or by any other concerned person? Can this initiative be funded by School Fund)

- 13. Do the sustainability was ever discussed or any plan was made in relation to the sustenance of these developments done by Childfund India ends their Support. Is this ever raised in SMC meetings or School Annual meetings?**

- 14. How Parents / Caretaker feel about the STEM Education?**

(probe : do they promote as future career options for their children , or do they feel its as a school mandates only and does participate in events organized, very much interested and always participate)

D. Challenges and Suggestions

- 1. What is your overall satisfaction with the STEM Education Program implemented in your school by Childfund India?**

(Probe : Is it worth implementing, not that much beneficial)

- 2. What key challenges have you faced in implementing STEM activities within your school, particularly regarding infrastructure development, teacher training, and student participation?**

(Probe: Have issues such as fund limitation / insufficient teacher preparation/ Inappropriate infrastructure / delay in installation/ too much paperwork and alike)

- 3. Reflecting on your experience with the Child Fund STEM Education Program, which components do you believe should be continued, modified, or expanded to enhance their effectiveness?**

(Probe: Are there specific activities or resources that have been particularly successful or areas where adjustments could lead to better outcomes?)

4. Do you think that this project is a successful step, or it needs to be redesigned by adding some more components? How Satisfied you are with the Intervention?

(Probe: what are lacking in implementation, limitations of project as a whole, what project should be like according to you)

5. Any Suggestion recommendations you want to extend to project team?

(Probe: try to get the limitation of project whether its design and implementations)

A. General Information

1. Name:
2. School Name:
3. Designation / Position in SMC:
4. Duration of SMC Membership:

B. School and Infrastructure Overview

1. **Are you aware about the support provided by Childfund India in school? if yes then what are those? Have you ever visited the smartclassroom / science lab developed in school?**

(Probe: How you come to know this, is this discussed before implementation, or you came to know after wards or do you come to know through your children)

2. **Were you or the community aware of Science & Technology or STEM education before the development of STEM infrastructure in the school? What are your thoughts on STEM-related career opportunities for your children? Do you want your children to pursue a career in STEM fields?**

(Probe: How does the community perceive the usefulness of facilities such as the Mini Science Centre, Learning Centre, or SMART Classrooms in improving students' learning in Science and Mathematics)

3. **Do you know that teachers have got training under this Programme? what are those training is all about?**

(Probe: Do you observed any changes in teaching methods of teachers after training)

C. OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria

Relevance

1. **After infrastructure development of STEM what do you think is needed in this school, do school infrastructure supports this type of development? Do you think that by this project your children will learn concepts more easily?**

(Probe: Have you noticed any changes in student interest, engagement, or academic performance since their introduction)

2. **After the development of STEM infrastructure, what do you think it is needed in the school? Or The school already have these labs? Do you believe this project will help your children understand concepts more easily?**

(Probe: Do school supports this, and your students have access to these resources)

Coherence

3. **How does the Childfund India STEM Education Program align with other educational programs or government schemes in your school or community. (As NEP)? How this curriculum aligned with Board Requirements in your State?**

(Probe: Does this program complement these initiatives, or does it address specific gaps in STEM education?)

4. **Add How well did the STEM program fit in with the school's existing development plans and activities?**

Effectiveness

5. **After the implementation of the program, what changes have you observed in students' engagement, participation, for STEM subjects and activities?**
(Probe: Are more students involved in workshops, exposure visits, science fairs, or showing interest in STEM careers?)
6. **How do you see girls' participation in STEM-related activities?**
Probe: Have there been any specific efforts under the program (parents' awareness, community campaigns) to promote girls' engagement in STEM?
7. **What has been your observation regarding the effectiveness of community engagement activities (parent sessions, awareness drives) and the quarterly STEM Newsletter?**
(Probe: Has the community shown increased awareness or support for STEM education due to these initiatives?)

Efficiency

8. **From the SMC's perspective, how efficiently are the STEM infrastructures and resources (Mini Science Centre models, SMART Classroom digital curriculum, STEM Library, Computer Labs) being used by teachers and students?**
Probe: Are there any resources that are underutilized or facing operational challenges (space, maintenance, technical issues)?
9. **How smoothly are STEM activities like teacher workshops, exposure visits, and student sessions being organized without disrupting regular classes?**
Probe: How has the SMC been involved in planning and supporting these activities?

Impact

10. **How has the program yielded positive outcomes for students, as after the STEM intervention, students are more regular in school, more interested in Science and Technology, and want to pursue a career in this field in the future?** *(Probe: Has there been an increase in enrolment, trust, or community participation?)*
11. **What long-term changes have you observed in the school and community as a result of the STEM Education Program?**
Probe: Have students shown more interest in higher education or careers in STEM fields? And have you seen improvements in skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, or creativity?

Sustainability

12. **Do you think that STEM initiatives like Smart Classrooms and Labs will sustain for a longer period, even after ChildFund's support ends? What is your understanding of this? What will be the major challenge in continuing the project?**
(Probe: Do you think all the systems are in place only as long as Childfund India is supporting, and they will stop once CF support ends?)
13. **What measures have been taken to ensure the sustainability of STEM activities after ChildFund's support ends? Has this ever been discussed in SMC meetings? Are you willing to contribute funds to sustain this program after ChildFund's support ends?**
(Probe: Are there any plans for maintaining infrastructures like Mini Science Centres, SMART Classrooms, or Computer Labs?)

14. **How prepared is the community to continue supporting STEM education initiatives in the future?**

D. Challenges and Suggestions

15. **What is your overall satisfaction with the STEM Education Program implemented in your school by Childfund India?**
(Probe : Is it worth implementing, not that much beneficial)
16. **What is your role as an SMC member in the implementation of STEM interventions in the school? Are you responsible for community engagement, parent involvement, or organizing community events to promote STEM?**
17. **What challenges has the SMC faced in supporting /facilitating the STEM infrastructures, teacher trainings, workshops, or community activities?**
(Probe: Were there issues related to resource availability, community participation)
18. **In your opinion, which components or activities of the STEM Education Program should be continued, modified, or expanded in future phases?**
(Probe: Which interventions (exposure visits, Mini Science Centre, STEM Library, parent sessions) were most impactful or need improvement?
19. **Any Suggestion / Recommendations from your side for the project implementation team?**
(Probe: What is the gap, what needs to be done for smooth functioning and sustainability of this project)

General Information

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Teaching Experience (In years)
5. Subjects Taught

STEM Related Information

1. **Which grades do you teach Science / Math?**
2. **Is there dedicated available in your school to facilitate your science teaching?**
(Probe: like science lab, science equipment, computer lab, etc.)
3. **Do you think students in your school are curious about Science and Math?** *(Probe: Do they ask questions, show interest in experiments, or try to learn beyond textbooks?)* **(Curiosity)**
4. **How do you keep students engaged while teaching Science and Math?** *(Probe: Do you use activities, experiments, or discussions to make learning interesting?)* **(Engagements)**
5. **Do you feel confident in teaching Science and Math effectively?** *(Probe: Do you think more training or better resources would help you teach these subjects better?)* **(Competence)**
6. **Have you ever tried new or creative ways to teach Science and Math?** *(Probe: Have you used simple experiments, models, technology, or real-life examples to explain concepts?)* **(Innovations)**
7. **In past year have you attended any training programs/ workshops related to science and technology teaching organized by education department/ any NGO / Foundations?**
(If yes, what were the topics covered? If not, do you think such training is needed for enhancing your teaching skills)
8. **If you receive training on STEM-related teaching methods, would you be willing to apply those methods in your daily teaching? Why or why not?** *(Probe: Do you think integrating STEM methods into your regular teaching would be practical in your school's environment)*
9. **What are the main challenges you face in teaching Science and Math in School?**
(Probe: Are there is science equipment's, labs and other teaching materials available in your school like charts, posters anything)
10. **In past year were any science-related activities or programs conducted in the school?**
(If yes then what was that, workshops, science exhibitions/fair)
11. **Do you think that dedicated STEM infrastructure (like a Mini Science Centre, Smart Classroom, or STEM Learning Centre) is necessary to generate interest among students for science and technology subjects?**

12. Do you think parents should be oriented about STEM subjects to help create a supportive environment that encourages students to engage more with Science and Math?
13. What are the biggest challenges in improving Science and Math education in your school? *(Probe: Lack of resources, limited training, student interest, parental involvement, etc.)*
14. Do you think introducing a STEM program in your school would make Science and Math more engaging for students? *(Why or Why Not)*

Inclusion/ Exclusion: Maths / Science Teacher who attended training provided by Childfund India

A. General Information

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Teaching Experience (In years)
5. Subjects Taught
6. School Name
7. School Grades

B. Information Regarding STEM Programme in School

1. Which grades do you teach Science / Math?
2. **What STEM-related infrastructure has ChildFund India developed in your school?**

(Probe: Mini Science Center, STEM Learning Center, Smart Classroom) Do you have these earlier to chidFund interventions)

3. **Have you attended any training programs conducted by Childfund India?**
(Probe: how many did you attend, and what is the training is about was it useful for you)
4. **How would you describe the change in your understanding of STEM techniques before and after the training? How important was that training for you?**
(Probe: DO you think that the training has prepared you with a new set of teaching methods)
5. **Have you attended any training by the state education department / NGO/ Foundation? If attended, then is there any difference between Childfund India training and that training?**
(probe for more details about training its components and its effectiveness)
6. **How many STEM-related activities for students have been conducted by Childfund India in last 1 year?**
(Probe: like science exhibition, workshops, exposure visit to science museum and any other activity) ?
(Probe: what is the engagement training, workshops, conference)
7. **What is the level of engagement of girls in STEM-related activities?**
(Probe: Do they participate or choose to stay away, or are they at par with boys)
8. **Does your school have enough infrastructure for the STEM program? What Kind of Books are available in STEM Lab/ Library?**
(Probe: Do your school have enough classrooms for separate Science lab, Enough Space to carry out student's workshops and all, do students take interest in reading the books available)

C. Evaluation of OECD Criteria

Relevance

1. **How much do you think the STEM infrastructure i.e Mini Science Centre, SMART Classroom, STEM Learning Centre help students understand Science and Math concepts?**

(Probe: Does this help students understand STEM concepts and their applications, are students more curious about knowing new science concepts and its applications)

2. **How are Students utilizing this STEM infrastructure and how this is helping them in their regular studies?**

(Probe: Do these activities keep students engaged more with topics and concepts, do students become more exploratory)

Coherence

3. **How much does the STEM program align with your core school curriculum, state education syllabus and NEP?**

(Probes: Is it in Sync with the syllabus and complements each other or have a different set of curriculum)

4. **Have you noticed improvements in grade of students in maths and science in exams due to availability of STEM Infrastructure?**

(Probes: Do students understand the science and maths concepts in a better way and that is also felt in exam scores)

Effectiveness

5. **What changes have you seen in Students, how curious they are, and how much they do in Science and Math since Child Fund India started the STEM Program?**

(Probe: Are they more interested in doing science projects, want to spend more time in doing science experiments)

6. **Do you use training methods, teaching aids, science models in your daily teachings? How often you use it monthly, weekly, daily? Does Your Teaching methods impacted due to training?**

(Probe: Are you using the training, things, or teaching tools (like the STEM Mini Science Centre, SMART Classroom, and computer tools) from the program in your everyday teaching?)

7. **In what ways the training has improved your teaching skills and instilled the confidence for teaching STEM Subjects using the new techniques and tools?**

(probe Usage of Science Model , STEM lab, SmartTV)

Efficiency

8. **What is the functionality of STEM Equipment's (like the Mini Science Centre, SMART Classroom, STEM Learning Centre) are easy to get to, easy to use, and used regularly?**

(Probe: Do students have regular access to labs, can science models and there is enough room for keeping things, do the equipment provided is of good quality)

9. **Is the training provided by Child Fund India gives you a good time and helpful for you to get better at teaching? Does this prepare you to effectively use the infrastructure developed at school?**

(Probe: Does training equipped you for know-how of smart TV, Science models and all)

Impact

- 10. Have you noticed that Students are more interested in science and technology and inclined towards science related career opportunities**

(Probe: Do the students talk about science and technology in their peer groups)

- 11. How has going to Child Fund India's STEM teacher training changed how sure you are about teaching and how you teach?**

(Probe: Do you teach Differently after getting training for STEM, is there is difference in teaching methods you apply as compared to teachers who haven't underwent any training)

Sustainability

- 12. Do you think that after the intervention now, parents understand about STEM and will motivate their children in choosing a STEM-related career in Future?**

(Probe: Do parents show more interest in STEM programme and encourages their children to take participation in activities)

- 13. Do you believe that the changes and improvements brought by Childfund India will be sustainable in long run ? how long this will be sustained? Has the school developed any plans for maintaining and continuing STEM activities post-project?**

(Probe: Any discussion held in school with SMC or Education Officers that how you will continue the efforts of Childfund India in future)

D. Challenges and Suggestions

- 6. What is your overall satisfaction with the STEM Education Program implemented in your school by Childfund India India?**

(Probe : Is it worth implementing, not that much beneficial)

- 1. What problems you faced in implementing the STEM related activities in your School?**

(Probe: like in operating smartboard, managing science lab, keeping models,

- 2. Do you think that this STEM project should be replicated in other schools?**

(Probe if yes, then why _ If not then why)

- 3. What is your suggestion in context of STEM project of Childfund India in your School?**

- 4. Any other information you want to share regarding STEM Project Intervention?**

FY 26

Learning Outcome -FY 26 ASSESSMENT

TOOL – ASER ASSESMENT TOOL



DURING FY2026, ASSESSMENTS WERE CONDUCTED
ACROSS **27 PROJECT LOCATIONS** OVER ALL FOUR
QUARTERS, COVERING THE PERIOD FROM **JULY 2025 TO
JUNE 2026**. A TOTAL SAMPLE SIZE OF **5607
PARTICIPANTS/RECORDS** WAS ASSESSED.

Executive Summary – Numeracy and Reading Learning Outcomes

The Q1-Q4 assessment results indicate overall positive progression in learners' foundational learning across both numeracy and reading. The results suggest that learners are gradually moving from foundational competency levels towards more advanced skills, reflecting improvements in basic learning outcomes over the assessment period.

In numeracy, there is a clear reduction in the proportion of learners at the Beginner and basic Number Recognition levels, particularly in the higher grades. By Q4, learners are predominantly concentrated in Addition, Subtraction, and Division, indicating improved computational competency. However, progression from computation to mathematical reasoning and problem-solving remains an area requiring greater attention. The substantial quarter-to-quarter variation observed in Word Problem performance also highlights the need to strengthen assessment consistency and learner-level tracking.

In reading, the overall learning trajectory similarly indicates movement from foundational reading skills towards higher levels of reading competency. The results point to progress in learners' ability to recognise, read, and comprehend text; however, gaps remain in achieving fluent reading and deeper comprehension, particularly among learners who continue to remain at lower competency levels.

Across both domains, the findings indicate that foundational learning is improving, but progression towards higher-order skills is not yet consistent for all learners. The key programme priority should therefore shift from building basic skills alone to ensuring mastery, application, fluency, comprehension, and problem-solving.

The Q1-Q4 results also reinforce the importance of learner-level progression analysis, rather than relying only on the distribution of learners across competency levels. Tracking individual learner movement will help identify who is progressing, who is stagnating, and which learners require targeted support.

Overall Programme Message

The Q1-Q4 results show encouraging progress in both numeracy and literacy, with learners increasingly moving beyond foundational competencies. The next phase should focus on sustaining these gains by strengthening reading fluency and comprehension, while advancing numeracy from computation to reasoning and problem-solving.

Contents

Executive Summary – Numeracy and Reading Learning Outcomes.....	1
Numeracy Learning Progression Analysis Report.....	2
1. Executive Summary.....	2
2. Assessment Framework.....	3
Table 1: Data sheet: n- 5607.....	4
3. Grade-wise Analysis.....	5
4. Cross-Grade Findings.....	7
5. Key Programme-Level Insights.....	8
6. Conclusion.....	8
Numeracy Learning Progression Analysis Report.....	9
1. Executive Summary.....	9
Table: Data sheet (n-22428).....	10
2. Overall Q4 Learning Profile.....	11
Key Management Message.....	15
Overall Summary – Numeracy and Reading.....	15

- Number Recognition 1–9 declined from 2% to 1%.
- Number Recognition 11–99 reduced from 19% to 7%.
- Subtraction remained consistently high at approximately 33%.
- Division increased from 19% to 28%.
- Word Problems increased from 11% to 15%.

Interpretation

Grade 5 shows a positive shift from number-recognition competencies toward Subtraction, Division, and Word Problems. This indicates meaningful progression in computational ability, although the relatively high proportion at the Subtraction level indicates scope for further movement towards higher-order application.

Grade 6

Grade 6 presents a mixed but generally positive picture.

- Foundational levels are very low by Q4.
- Number Recognition 1–9 declined from 3% to almost 0%.
- Number Recognition 11–99 reduced from 6% to 5%.
- Addition increased from 13% to 18%.
- Subtraction increased from 29% to 36%.
- Division increased from 30% to 34%.
- Word Problems declined from 18% to 6%.

Interpretation

The strongest achievement is the concentration of learners in Subtraction and Division. However, the decline in Word Problems from 18% to 6% requires attention. This may indicate difficulty transferring computational skills into problem-solving contexts or may reflect differences in assessment administration.

Grade 7

Grade 7 shows strong competency in higher-level computation but significant fluctuations.

- Beginner level remained at 0%.
- Number Recognition levels remained very low.
- Subtraction increased from 23% to 34%.
- Division remained high at approximately 44% in Q4.
- Word Problems fluctuated substantially, from 16% in Q1 to 37% in Q2, before falling to 4% in Q4.

Interpretation

The very high proportion of learners at the Division level indicates strong computational progression. However, the sharp decline in Word Problems warrants further investigation. Learners may possess computational skills

Word Problem	11%	5%	↓ 6 pp

Interpretation

The reduction in Beginner-level learners from 9% to 1% is a strong positive finding. There is also a substantial increase in Subtraction and Division.

However, the decline in Word Problems from 11% to 5% suggests that progress in computational skills is not automatically translating into problem-solving ability.

Priority: Strengthen application and problem-solving alongside computation.

4. Grade 4 - Strong Movement Towards Higher Competencies

Grade 4 shows significant progression from basic recognition towards higher numeracy skills.

- Number Recognition 1-9 declined from 6% to 5%.
- Number Recognition 11-99 increased initially but reduced to 15% by Q4.
- Addition declined from 23% to 11%.
- Subtraction remained high at 29%.
- Division reached 24%.
- Word Problems increased substantially from 5% to 16%.

Interpretation

The increase in Word Problem competency is particularly encouraging. The movement from Addition toward Subtraction, Division, and Word Problems suggests a broader progression across competency levels.

Priority: Consolidate higher-order application while ensuring learners retain mastery of basic operations.

5. Grade 5 - Strongest Overall Positive Movement

Grade 5 demonstrates strong progression across the competency pathway.

Key changes from Q1 to Q4:

- Number Recognition 11-99: 19% → 7%
- Addition: 16% → 15%
- Subtraction: 33% → 33%
- Division: 19% → 28%
- Word Problem: 11% → 15%

Interpretation

The decline in Number Recognition 11–99 combined with increased Division and Word Problems indicates a positive movement towards higher numeracy competencies.

Grade 5 can potentially serve as a good example of how learners transition from foundational numeracy to more advanced computation.

Priority: Increase the proportion progressing from Division to problem-solving and mathematical reasoning.

6. Grade 6 - Strong Computational Competency but Mixed Application

Grade 6 has a high concentration of learners at the Subtraction and Division levels.

- Subtraction increased from 29% to 36%.
- Division increased from 30% to 34%.
- Number Recognition 11–99 declined from 6% to 5%.
- Word Problems declined from 18% to 6%.

Interpretation

The data demonstrates strong computational competency. However, the decline in Word Problem performance is concerning.

This may indicate a gap between knowing mathematical procedures and applying them to contextual problems.

Priority: Integrate problem-solving exercises into routine numeracy sessions rather than treating problem-solving as a separate competency.

7. Grade 7 - Strong Division Competency but High Volatility

Grade 7 shows particularly strong performance in Division.

- Subtraction: 23% → 34%
- Division: 45% → 44%
- Word Problem: 16% → 4%

The most significant concern is the fluctuation in Word Problems:

16% → 37% → 8% → 4%

Interpretation

Nearly half of the learners are at the Division level in Q4, demonstrating strong computational ability.

However, the sharp movement in Word Problem results requires validation. Such variation could be associated with:

- assessment differences;

- differences in learner participation;
- changes in assessment administration;
- learner-level movement; or
- differences in the difficulty of questions.

Priority: Validate the assessment data and strengthen mathematical reasoning.

8. Grade 8 - Advanced Computation but Problem-Solving Concern

Grade 8 has almost no learners at the Beginner and basic Number Recognition levels.

By Q4:

- Subtraction: 46%
- Division: 20%
- Word Problem: 8%

However, Word Problem performance fluctuated dramatically:

34% → 68% → 17% → 8%

Interpretation

The results indicate that Grade 8 learners have largely progressed beyond foundational numeracy. However, a significant proportion remains concentrated at Subtraction.

The decline in Word Problem competency is particularly important because Grade 8 learners would be expected to demonstrate stronger application and reasoning skills.

Priority: Focus on higher-order numeracy, reasoning, multi-step problems, and real-life application.

Conclusion

The Q1-Q4 data presents encouraging evidence of progression in foundational and computational numeracy, particularly in Grades 3-5. By Q4, very few learners remain at the lowest competency levels, while Subtraction and Division have become dominant competency levels in Grades 6-8.

At the same time, the data highlights a critical computation-to-application gap. Learners appear to be acquiring computational skills, but this is not consistently reflected in their Word Problem competency.

Therefore, the next phase of the programme should focus on:

Foundational Learning → Computational Fluency → Mathematical Reasoning → Real-life Application



ChildFund
India

Pilot Study on the Online Risks of Children in Karnataka

Focus on online sexual exploitation and abuse of children



A Joint Initiative of the Karnataka State Commission for
Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) and ChildFund India

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The rapid expansion of digital technology has opened new opportunities for children to learn, connect, and express themselves. However, it has also exposed them to significant risks, including Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC). This report is a crucial step in understanding the nature and extent of these risks at the state level and identifying effective ways to mitigate them. It would not have been possible without the collaboration and dedication of various stakeholders who have contributed their time, expertise, and insights to make this research meaningful and impactful.

We are grateful to the Chairperson, other Members, and staff of the **Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Children's Rights (KSCPCR)** for their guidance and endorsement of this study. Their commitment to child protection and policy advocacy strengthens our collective efforts.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the **Academy of Management Studies (AMS)** team for their vital role in conducting the baseline study. Their meticulous approach to research and commitment to producing evidence-based insights have been instrumental in shaping this study and providing a strong foundation for meaningful interventions.

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We acknowledge the contributions of law enforcement agencies, including **Government Officials, Juvenile Justice Boards, the Police Department, and the cybercrime department**, for providing critical insights into legal frameworks, reporting mechanisms, and challenges in addressing OSEAC cases. Their expertise has been crucial in identifying areas for policy and procedural improvements.

A special thanks to the **Child Protection Committees** for their role in child protection at the community level, ensuring awareness, intervention, and safeguarding mechanisms are in place for vulnerable children.

We extend our appreciation to officials from **prominent NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** for their unwavering dedication to advocating for children's rights and safety. Their community-based efforts, interventions, and advocacy have significantly contributed to shaping effective preventive measures.

We acknowledge the **School Authorities, Block Education Officers, and District Education Officers** for granting the necessary permission and facilitating interactions with children and educators. Their



cooperation was instrumental in ensuring the smooth execution of this research. Further, we would also like to thank **the teachers** who contributed their observations on children's online behaviour, helping us understand the risks and challenges faced within the school environment. Their perspectives on digital literacy and child safety have been invaluable.

We express our sincere gratitude **to the children and their parents** who participated in the study, sharing their experiences and perspectives. Their courage and openness provided vital first hand insights that formed the foundation of this research.

This report is a testament to the power of collaboration. We hope our collective efforts will contribute to meaningful change in safeguarding children in the digital space. We sincerely thank everyone who supported this initiative and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring a safer online environment for children.



Rajesh Ranjan Singh
Board Member
ChildFund India

MESSAGE FROM KARNATAKA STATE COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS (KSCPCR)



Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights

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Message from the Chairperson, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR)

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, children are more connected than ever before. The internet offers vast opportunities for education, entertainment, and social interaction, empowering young minds to explore and learn. However, this increased digital engagement also exposes them to significant risks, including online sexual exploitation and abuse. As guardians of child rights, we must understand these risks and take proactive measures to protect our children from harm.

The *"State-Level Study on Online Risks of Children: Focus on Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children"* is a crucial initiative undertaken by the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) in collaboration with ChildFund India. ChildFund India's commitment to the well-being of children is remarkable. This comprehensive study is the first of its kind in Karnataka, aiming to explore the extent of online risks faced by children, understand the contributing factors, and provide evidence-based recommendations for safeguarding children in the digital world.

This report captures the voices of children, parents, teachers, and child protection stakeholders, offering a holistic understanding of the digital experiences and vulnerabilities faced by children today. It highlights the urgent need for awareness, digital literacy, and robust reporting mechanisms to ensure children's safety online. The findings also emphasize the importance of a collaborative approach, calling upon parents, educators, policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and communities to work together to create a safer digital environment.

The KSCPCR remains committed to protecting the rights and well-being of every child in Karnataka. This study is a reflection of our dedication to addressing emerging threats in the digital age. It is not just a documentation of challenges but a call to action for all stakeholders to join hands in safeguarding children from online exploitation and abuse.

The findings of this study will play a pivotal role in shaping policies and interventions aimed at safeguarding children from online threats. By identifying risk factors and evaluating the effectiveness of current response mechanisms, we can develop more targeted strategies for prevention, capacity-building, and victim support. KSCPCR remains dedicated to advocating for the rights of children and ensuring their protection in both physical and digital spaces.

We express our sincere gratitude to ChildFund India for their invaluable partnership and to all participants who contributed to this study. We hope that the insights and recommendations provided in this report will inspire meaningful action, leading to a safer and more secure digital landscape for children in Karnataka.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the researchers, stakeholders, and all those who have contributed to this important study. We believe that the insights derived from this research will catalyze stronger child protection policies and a safer online environment for our children. Let this study be a step forward in our collective commitment to ensuring that every child in Karnataka can grow up free from exploitation, with their rights protected and their futures secured.

Let this study be a step forward in our collective commitment to ensuring that every child in Karnataka can grow up free from exploitation, with their rights protected and their futures secured.

Warm regards,

(K Naganna Gowda)

Chairperson,

Karnataka State Commission for
Protection of Child Rights



Preface

In an increasingly digital world, the internet has become a powerful tool for learning, communication, and entertainment. It provides children with unprecedented opportunities for growth and exploration. However, alongside these benefits come significant risks, including exposure to online sexual exploitation and abuse. These threats, often hidden behind screens and digital platforms, pose serious dangers to children's safety and well-being. To address these challenges, it is essential to understand the nature and extent of online risks faced by children today.

Recognizing this urgent need, ChildFund India and the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights are proud to present the report, ***“State-Level Study on Online Risks of Children: Focus on Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children.”*** This report is a comprehensive effort to understand the digital experiences of children in Karnataka, capturing insights from children themselves, as well as from parents, teachers, and child protection stakeholders. By exploring their perceptions and experiences, this study provides a holistic view of the vulnerabilities children face in the digital realm.

ChildFund India believes in leveraging evidence to design and adapt its programs, ensuring that interventions are relevant and impactful. This study is a testament to that commitment, offering critical insights into the prevalence and factors contributing to online sexual exploitation and abuse. It not only identifies the challenges but also proposes actionable strategies for prevention and protection, aiming to create a safer digital environment for children.

The findings of this report underline the importance of a collaborative approach. Protecting children from online risks requires the concerted efforts of parents, educators, policymakers, and communities. It necessitates raising awareness, enhancing digital literacy, and strengthening reporting mechanisms. By fostering a culture of vigilance and proactive engagement, we can empower children to navigate the digital world safely.



This report is more than just a collection of data and analysis; it is a call to action. It challenges all stakeholders to reflect on their roles in safeguarding children and encourages collective action to create a digital landscape where children can learn, explore, and grow without fear. We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, educators, child protection advocates, and all who are committed to child safety. Together, let us build a world where the digital space is not just a place of opportunity but also a sanctuary of safety and trust for every child.

Let us unite to create a digital world where children can safely explore, learn, and thrive without the threat of exploitation or abuse.



Dr. Nirja S. Mattoo
Secretary
ChildFund India



K Naganna Gowda
Chairperson
**Karnataka State Commission
for Protection of Child Rights**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMINOLOGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	(i-v)
-------------------------------	--------------

Chapter-1: Study Context: Background.....	1
--	----------

1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.1.1	Contextual Description	1
1.1.2	Overview of the Prevalence and Nature of OSEAC in India.....	2
1.1.3	Legislative Framework in India for Addressing OSEAC	2
1.2	The Rationale of the Study	3
1.3	Objectives of the Study	4

Chapter-2: Study Approach & Methodology	5
--	----------

2.1	Theoretical Framework	5
2.2	Research Design	6
2.3	Data Collection Methods and Tools	7
2.3.1	Secondary Data Collection	7
2.3.2	Primary Data Collection – Qualitative Method	7
2.3.3	Primary Data Collection - Quantitative Method	8
2.4	Sampling Methodology.....	8
2.4.1	Study Area.....	8
2.4.2	Sample Size Estimation	8
2.4.3	Sample Distribution in Karnataka.....	9
2.5	Sampling Strategy.....	10
2.5.1	Selection of First-Stage Sampling Units.....	10
2.5.2	Selection of Second-Stage Sampling Units	11

2.5.3	Selection of Ultimate Sampling Units	11
2.6	Sample Coverage in Karnataka.....	12
2.7	Data Analysis	13
2.8	Ethical Policies Adopted while Interviewing Children.....	13
2.8.1	Consenting Process	13
2.8.2	Benefits and Risks	14
2.8.3	Confidentiality	14
2.8.4	Privacy	14
2.8.5	Voluntary Participation	15
2.9	Challenges and Limitations of the Study	15
2.10	Contributions of Karnataka SCPCR	15
Chapter-3: Profile of The Respondents		17
3.1	Socio Demographic Profile of the Respondents	17
3.1.1	Region.....	17
3.1.2	Gender.....	17
3.1.3	School Going Status.....	18
3.1.4	Occupation of Parents	18
3.1.5	Family Members	19
3.2	Socio-Economic Profile	20
3.2.1	Ownership of Vehicles	20
3.2.2	Ownership of Appliances	20
Chapter-4: Vulnerability Factors and Usage of Web Platforms.....		21
4.1	Relationships Held by Children	21
4.1.1	Primary Caregiver.....	21
4.1.2	Friends	22
4.1.3	Trusted Confidants of Children.....	22

4.2	Usage of Electronic Devices	25
4.2.1	Usage of Mobile.....	25
4.2.2	Accessibility of Mobiles/Laptops	25
4.2.3	Frequency of Mobile Phone & Laptop Usage	26
4.2.4	Duration of Mobile Phone & Laptop Usage	27
4.2.5	Usage of Different Web Platforms by Children	28
4.2.6	Children's Participation in Web & Social Media Activities.....	29
4.2.7	Change in Internet Usage by Children after Covid-19 Pandemic.....	29
4.2.8	Monitoring/Supervision of Screen Time by Primary Caregiver	30
Chapter-5: Nature & Extent of OSEAC Prevalence in Karnataka		32
5.1	Children Who Reported Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online	32
5.1.1	Prevalence Rate.....	32
5.1.2	Common Platforms Where Children Felt Unsafe or Uncomfortable.....	33
5.1.3	Perpetrators' Relationship with Children	34
5.2	Prevalence of Children Engaging with Strangers	34
5.2.1	Children who Befriended Online Strangers.....	34
5.2.2	Children Who Met Online Strangers in Person.....	35
5.2.3	Children who Shared Personal Information with Strangers Online.....	36
5.2.4	Children Who Shared Intimate Photos/ Videos with Strangers Online.....	36
5.2.5	Awareness of OSEAC Incidents Among Peer Groups.....	37
5.3	Prevalence of OSEAC According to Parents	37
Chapter-6: Awareness & Perception of Risk Factors in Karnataka		40
6.1	Perception on the Likelihood of Children to Experience OSEAC.....	40
6.2	Perception of Platforms with the Highest & Lowest Risk for OSEAC	41
6.3	Perception of Risk Involved in Engaging with Strangers Online	42
6.4	Perception of Risk of Sharing Intimate Information with Strangers Online.....	42
6.5	Perception of Risk of Having Access to Pornography	43
6.6	Sources of Awareness about Risk for Children.....	44

6.7	Digital Safety Skills in Parents	45
Chapter-7: Effective Prevention & Intervention Strategies		46
7.1	Awareness Programs on Digital Safety	46
7.2	Steps to Make Internet Surfing Safer	47
7.3	Support Services in District (By Parents)	48
Chapter-8: Insights from Qualitative Discussions		49
8.1	Teachers	49
8.1.1	Awareness and Understanding of OSEAC Among Teachers	49
8.1.2	Perceived Causes and Increased Risks.....	49
8.1.3	Role of Schools in Safeguarding Children.....	49
8.1.4	Parents as Key Stakeholders in Prevention.....	50
8.1.5	Challenges in Addressing OSEAC and Supporting Victims	50
8.1.6	Need for Stronger Community and Institutional Support	50
8.2	District Officials.....	50
8.2.1	Awareness and Training	50
8.2.2	Prevalence and Contributing Factors	51
8.2.3	Perpetrators and Vulnerable Groups	51
8.2.4	Forms of OSEAC and Reporting Challenges	51
8.2.5	Preventive Measures and Inter-Departmental Collaboration.....	51
8.2.6	Support Services and Accessibility	52
8.2.7	Role of Parents and Schools	52
8.2.8	Social Norms and Post-Pandemic Impact.....	52
8.2.9	Recommendations by Officials	52
8.3	NGO Representatives/Academicians.....	53
8.3.1	Efforts to Address OSEAC	53
8.3.2	Contributing Factors to OSEAC	53

8.3.3	Challenges in Reporting.....	53
8.3.4	Criminal Motives and Operations.....	54
8.3.5	Vulnerabilities of Children.....	54
8.3.6	Gap in Law Enforcement.....	54
8.3.7	Recommendations.....	54
8.4	Community Members	55
8.4.1	Usage of Mobile Phones Among Children	55
8.4.2	Awareness About OSEAC	55
8.4.3	Vulnerable Groups	56
8.4.4	Reporting Mechanisms	56
8.4.5	Role of Parents and Teachers	56
8.4.6	Community's Response to OSEAC	56
8.4.7	Improving Support Services	56
Chapter-9:	Conclusion & Recommendations.....	57
9.1	Key Takeaways	57
9.2	Conclusion	58
9.3	Recommendations.....	61
9.4	Suggested Action Plan	64

List of Tables

Chapter-2: Study Approach & Methodology	5
Table 2.1: Sample Distribution	9
Table 2.2: Quantitative Survey Coverage	12
Table 2.3: Qualitative Survey Coverage	13
 Chapter-3: Profile of The Respondents	 17
Table 3.1: Occupation of Parents/Guardians	18
Table 3.2: Family Members	19
 Chapter-4: Vulnerability Factors and Usage of Web Platforms.....	 21
Table 4.1: Distribution of Children Based on Primary Caregiver.....	21
Table 4.2: Distribution of Children Based on Place of Forming Friendship	22
Table 4.3: Distribution of Children Based on Trusted Confidants (8–11-year-olds)	23
Table 4.4: Distribution of Children Based on Trusted Confidants (12–14-year-olds)	23
Table 4.5: Distribution of Children Based on Trusted Confidants (15-18-year olds)	24
Table 4.6: Distribution of Children Based on Accessibility of Mobile Phones/Laptops (%)	26
Table 4.7: Reasons for Change in Internet Usage by Children After Covid-19 Pandemic (%)	30
 Chapter-5: Nature & Extent of OSEAC Prevalence in Karnataka	 32
Table 5.1: Prevalence of Children that Reported Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online (%)	33
Table 5.2: Platforms Where Children Felt Unsafe or Uncomfortable	33
Table 5.3: Types of Personal Information Shared with Strangers Online (%)	36
Table 5.4: Types of Incidents that 15-18-Year-Old Children were Aware of Other Children Having One Through (N=16)	37

List of Figures

Chapter-3: Profile of The Respondents	17
Figure. 3.1: Region wise Respondent Distribution.....	17
Figure 3.2: Gender wise Respondent Distribution	18
Figure 3.3: School Going Status.....	18
Figure. 3.4: Region wise ownership of vehicles.....	20
Figure. 3.5: Region wise Ownership of Appliances	20
Chapter-4: Vulnerability Factors and Usage of Web Platforms.....	21
Figure 4.1: Distribution of Gender of Children by Usage of Mobile Phone/Laptop.....	25
Figure 4.2: Region wise Usage of Mobiles/Laptops (%)	25
Figure 4.3: Frequency of Mobile Phone & Laptop Usage	27
Figure 4.4: Duration of Mobile Phone & Laptop Usage	27
Figure 4.5A: Distribution of Children by Usage of Different Web Platforms	28
Figure 4.5B: Distribution of Children by Usage of Different Web Platforms	28
Figure 4.6: Proportion of Children who Often Participate in Web & Social Media Activities	29
Figure 4.7: Change in Internet Usage by Children after Covid-19 Pandemic.....	30
Figure 4.8: Frequency of Screen Time Monitoring by Primary Caregiver.....	31
Chapter-5: Nature & Extent of OSEAC Prevalence in Karnataka	32
Figure 5.1: Gender wise Prevalence of Children that Reported Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online (%).....	32
Figure 5.2: Distribution of Children by Type of Relationship held with Perpetrator	34
Figure 5.3: Gender wise proportion of children who added strangers to friend's lists (N=312)	34
Figure 5.4: Gender wise proportion of children who met online Strangers in Person (N=312)	35
Figure 5.5: Reasons Behind 15-18-Year-Old Children Engaging with Strangers Online (N=60)	35
Figure 5.6: Gender wise proportion of children who shared personal info with strangers online	36

Figure 5.7: Gender wise proportion of children who shared intimate images/videos with strangers online (N=312).....	36
Figure 5.8: Prevalence of Types of OSEAC as Reported by Parents (N= 44).....	38
Figure 5.9: Steps Taken by Parents (N= 44).....	38
Chapter-6: Awareness & Perception of Risk Factors in Karnataka	40
Figure 6.1: Proportion of children who mentioned children are likely to Experience OSEAC (%)	40
Figure 6.2: Awareness of the Biggest Risks to Children Among 12-18-year Olds (N=625)	40
Figure 6.3: Perception of Risk of Talking to Strangers on Social Media	42
Figure 6.4: Perception of Risk of Sharing Intimate Information over the Internet	43
Figure 6.5: Perception of Risk of Having Access to Pornography	44
Figure 6.6: Percentage of Children that Had Been Told About the Dangers of Online Spaces	44
Figure 6.7: Digital Safety Skills in Parents	45
Chapter-7: Effective Prevention & Intervention Strategies	46
Figure 7.1: Proportion of Children who attended awareness Programs on digital Safety (%)	46
Figure 7.2: Place where they attended awareness programs	47
Figure 7.3: Ways in Which Support Can be Improved in the District (N=304)	48

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMINOLOGY

Acronym/Key Terminology	Full form/definition
CSEAM	Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material
Cyberbullying	Use of technology to harass, embarrass or target another person.
Cyberstalking	Use of internet/technology to follow another person's digital/physical activity
Good and bad touch	Good touch is physical contact that makes a child feel safe, comfortable, and loved, while bad touch is physical contact that makes a child feel uncomfortable, scared, or threatened
Internet intermediaries	Service Providers that enable interactions on the internet. Example: social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, X; private messaging platforms such as Discord, Telegram, WhatsApp etc.
IT Act	Information Technology Act, 2000
JJB	Juvenile Justice Board
OSEAC	Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children
POCSO Act	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012
SCPCR	State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
Social media influencer	A person with significant social media following who leverages it for influence
Sexual coercion	When someone pressures, tricks, or threatens another person into engaging in sexual activities
Sexual grooming	The action or behaviour used to establish an emotional connection with a vulnerable person – generally a minor, to lower their inhibitions with the objective of sexual abuse.
Sexual solicitation	Offering money and other things in exchange for engaging in sexual acts
Sexually explicit	Words/images/videos depicting sexual acts
Sextortion	The practice of extorting money or sexual favours from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) is a pervasive and complex issue that affects millions of children worldwide, with far-reaching consequences for their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. The nature of OSEAC in India involved various forms of exploitation, including child sexual abuse material, online grooming, and sextortion. Perpetrators often use social media platforms, online gaming, and chat rooms to target and exploit children, who are often vulnerable and lack the necessary skills and knowledge to protect themselves online.

Despite the gravity of the issue, there is a lack of comprehensive research on OSEAC in India, particularly at the state level. Existing studies have primarily focused on urban areas, with limited attention to rural areas where access to technology and digital literacy may be limited. This study aimed to address this knowledge gap by conducting a detailed study on OSEAC in Karnataka and to contribute to the growing body of research on OSEAC and to inform the development of effective strategies to prevent the exploitation and abuse of children online in India.

The major objectives of this study were to investigate the nature and prevalence of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) in Karnataka by estimating the prevalence of OSEAC among children aged 8 to 18 years, identifying different forms of exploitation and abuse they face and examining key risk factors contributing to their vulnerability.

The study employed a cross-sectional, exploratory research design with a comparative study component. This approach was chosen to comprehensively examine the prevalence, forms, and risk factors of OSEAC among children in Karnataka. The cross-sectional design involved the collection of data at a single point in time – estimating the prevalence of OSEAC among children. Quantitative and qualitative surveys were designed to be undertaken with multiple stakeholders.

In-depth interviews (IDIs)/ Semi-structures Interviews (SSIs) were conducted with a range of key stakeholders like representatives from the State Commission for Protection of Children Rights, Law enforcement agencies including Juvenile Justice Boards, Police Department, Cyber Crime Department, Child Rights Committees, officials of prominent NGOs/ CSOs and academicians from prominent institutions working in related subjects. In addition to the above, **semi-structured surveys** were conducted with School Teachers. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** were conducted with community members like PRI members, members of Yuva Mangal Dals, or other knowledgeable persons to explore the online behaviours of children in 8 to 18 years group.

The quantitative data collection method involved a **Structured Questionnaire Survey (SQS)**. The survey was administered to a sample of caregivers/parents, and children aged 8-18 years including school going children studying in classes 3rd to 12th as well as out of school children in the same age

group. The survey gathered information on their online behaviours, experiences, and perceptions of online sexual exploitation and abuse.

The required sample size was estimated to be 800 respondents per state. After taking an inflation factor of 10% to account for non-response bias, the overall state-level sample has been proposed at 900 children in the age group of 8 to 18 years. A **multi-stage stratified random sampling** approach was adopted to draw the required number of samples for this study. In the first stage, **five districts from Karnataka (Chamarajanagar, Raichur, Chikmagalur, Belgaum and Bengaluru)** were selected. In the next stage, schools of various types were sampled from the rural and urban areas, which constituted the Second-stage Sampling Units (SSUs). In the third stage, individual respondents were sampled, who constituted the Ultimate Sampling Units (USUs) in the study. Six schools were selected from each of the five districts and 30 students (10 each from 8-11 years, 12-14 years and 15-18 years categories) were sampled from each of these schools. Two out of school children from the vicinity of the sampled schools were also sampled for interviews.

Out of the targeted 60 respondents, only 24 out-of-school children were covered, primarily due to high gross enrolment rates in the districts. The coverage of school going children was 903 in Karnataka.

Key Findings from Quantitative Survey:

1. Vulnerability

Mothers were the primary caregivers for children across all age groups, but their role decreased during early adolescence (12-14 years) before increasing again in late adolescence. Online friendships were less common among younger children but became more frequent in the 15-18 age group. Interestingly, male children were more likely to form online friendships outside of school compared to females. Among adolescents, there was a shift in trusted confidants, with friends becoming the main sources for sharing secrets (49%) and dealing with embarrassment (44%). Social media use surged, especially among older children, following the COVID-19 pandemic. About 90% of younger children and 99% of older children used mobile phones or laptops. As children grew older, their online engagement increased significantly, with older children using mobile phones more frequently.

2. Prevalence and Platforms

Older children, particularly those aged 15-18 years, were more likely to experience unsafe online interactions, highlighting the need for targeted interventions. Around 5% of children in this age group reported feeling unsafe or embarrassed online, with Instagram being the platform involved in 77% of such incidents. Among those who had unsafe/embarrassing experiences, 53% reported that the perpetrator was an unknown person, while 35% indicated the involvement of a known person, and 12% experienced incidents involving both. Approximately 16% of children aged 15-18 had befriended strangers online, and 10% of them had met those strangers in person. 15% of those engaging with strangers online experienced immediate harm, underscoring the risks involved. As a support measure,

only 34% parents reported incidents to police as opposed to 50% who deleted the chat history and blocked the perpetrators' accounts.

3. Awareness and Supervision

Only 43% of parents regularly monitored their child's screen time, and just 20% of children had attended digital safety sessions. Among out-of-school children, only 4 out of 24 had attended awareness programs. A large majority of children, 78% of those aged 12-14 years and 75% of those aged 15-18 years, believed their peers were at risk of OSEAC. However, many parents were unaware of their children's online interactions, even though children had a high perception of the risks. More than half of the children mentioned that parental supervision was crucial in ensuring safe online behaviour. Schools also played an essential role in awareness programs, and collaboration with NGOs was recommended to ensure consistent messaging across different groups.

4. Risk Perception

Children were generally aware of the risks associated with OSEAC, but they lacked effective digital safety practices. While older children had a greater awareness of the risks tied to online interactions, younger children showed significant knowledge gaps, making them more vulnerable. Female children tended to have higher awareness of these risks, likely due to targeted safety messages, while male children had lower risk perception, indicating a need for better outreach to boys

Key Findings from Qualitative Discussions

1. Teachers

Teachers were aware of OSEAC but highlighted gaps in their training. They identified increased digital device usage during and after the pandemic as a major risk factor. While schools conducted sexual health programs, digital literacy initiatives were limited. Teachers emphasized the need for parental involvement, recommending open communication and digital safety measures. They also highlighted challenges such as victim-blaming and limited external support services. Teachers advocated for better institutional measures, community involvement, and awareness campaigns to safeguard children.

2. District Officials

Interviews with 40 district officials revealed varied awareness of OSEAC and a lack of specialized training. Officials linked the rise in cases to post-pandemic internet use, socio-economic factors, and unsupervised access to digital devices. Adolescents and girls from marginalized backgrounds were identified as particularly vulnerable. Challenges included underreporting, lack of inter-departmental coordination, and inadequate resources. Officials recommended mandatory training, stronger collaboration between stakeholders, improved accessibility to support services, and stricter law enforcement to combat OSEAC effectively.

3. NGO Representatives/Academicians

NGOs and academicians highlighted the role of advocacy, digital literacy, and awareness programs in combating OSEAC. They pointed out how increased screen time during the pandemic heightened risks for children. Challenges in reporting, driven by stigma and lack of trust in authorities, were significant barriers. They emphasized the need for trust-building, community involvement, and teacher training. Recommendations included promoting digital literacy, accessible reporting mechanisms, and collaborative efforts between schools, parents, and NGOs to ensure children's safety.

4. Community Members

FGDs with community members revealed limited initial awareness of OSEAC. Participants identified factors like low self-esteem, peer pressure, socio-economic challenges, and lack of supervision as contributing to children's vulnerability. They noted that victims often face stigma, isolation, and negative treatment within their communities, further discouraging reporting. Suggestions included greater parental involvement, teacher-led awareness initiatives, improved reporting mechanisms, and community responsibility for children's safety. Participants called for collaboration with internet service providers and district-level support services to monitor harmful content and provide resources for victims.

Recommendations

The Covid-19 pandemic significantly increased children's exposure to online risks, underscoring the urgent need for corrective measures. Parental supervision, teacher training, and digital literacy emerged as critical areas for prevention and mitigating risks. However, underreporting and societal stigma continue to pose significant challenges, discouraging victims and families from seeking help. Addressing OSEAC comprehensively requires a collaborative effort involving schools, parents, NGOs, and law enforcement, with a focus on awareness, support services, and stricter enforcement of child protection measures.

Enhancing Awareness: Promote digital safety through campaigns, workshops, and interactive tools, involving schools, communities, and ICT firms. Encourage open communication between parents and children about online risks and safe behavior. Conduct community awareness programs to educate families about OSEAC risks and reporting mechanisms.

Strengthening Prevention: Integrate online safety into school curriculums and develop age-appropriate toolkits. Use peer-led education and workshops to teach parents, especially in rural areas, about monitoring children's internet use. Involve children in designing safer online spaces and create community "Digital Safety Champions" for first-response support.



Improving Monitoring: Encourage parents to use monitoring tools while maintaining trust with their children. Establish school-based reporting mechanisms and train staff to handle cases sensitively. Conduct regular studies and surveys to track OSEAC trends and support data-driven policymaking.

Expanding Support Services: Provide district-level helplines and specialized child protection services for OSEAC victims. Collaborate with NGOs to offer counselling, legal aid, and rehabilitation. Train responders like police and social workers and gather feedback to improve services continuously.

Capacity Building of Stakeholders: Train law enforcement, judiciary, and teachers to address OSEAC effectively. Equip them with tools and knowledge to handle cases sensitively and implement coordinated responses. Develop resources for schools to educate children on digital safety.

Policy Advocacy: Form a Karnataka OSEAC Task Force to oversee prevention and rehabilitation. Advocate for stricter cybercrime laws, improved content moderation, and inclusion of OSEAC in education policies. Focus on victim-centered approaches prioritizing safety, privacy, and long-term support.

1

Study Context: Background

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Contextual Description

The Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) is a pervasive and complex issue that affects millions of children worldwide, with far-reaching consequences for their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. According to a global study, approximately 1 in 10 children experience sexual abuse before they turn 18¹. The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and the internet has exacerbated the problem, creating new avenues for perpetrators to access and exploit children. The anonymity of the internet, the lack of effective regulation, and the ease of access to child sexual abuse material have all contributed to the growth of OSEAC, making it a significant challenge for law enforcement agencies, policymakers, and child protection organizations².

Child sexual exploitation and abuse encompass a range of sexual behaviours directed at children and are recognized as some of the most reprehensible forms of violence against them. The impact of OSEAC on children is severe and long-lasting, with victims often experiencing psychological trauma, anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts³. Furthermore, OSEAC can have significant social and economic consequences, including increased healthcare costs, lost productivity, and reduced economic opportunities. The impact of OSEAC extends beyond the individual child, affecting their families, communities, and society as a whole.

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies and the internet has had a profound impact on the increase in OSEAC cases in India. The widespread use of social media, online gaming, and chat rooms has created new opportunities for perpetrators to target and exploit children, who are often vulnerable and lack the necessary skills and knowledge to protect themselves online.

The anonymity of the internet and the lack of effective regulation have made it easier for perpetrators to operate undetected. The ease of access to child sexual abuse material and the ability to share it online have also contributed to the increase in OSEAC cases. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has

¹ UNICEF. (2020). Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: A Review of the Evidence 2020. Retrieved from [UNICEF](<https://www.unicef.org/media/89206/file/CSAE-Brief-v3.pdf>)

² Europol. (2020). Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA). European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation. Retrieved from [Europol](<https://www.europol.europa.eu/iocta-report>)

³ Schmidt, F., Varese, F., & Bucci, S. (2023). Understanding the prolonged impact of online sexual abuse occurring in childhood. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1281996. (<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1281996>)

accelerated the growth of OSEAC, as children spend more time online and away from the safety net of their homes, schools, and parents. A study by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) found that in 2021, there were over 360,000 reports of child sexual abuse material online, with a significant portion of reports coming from social media platforms.

1.1.2 Overview of the Prevalence and Nature of OSEAC in India

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported that there were 24,926 cases of child sexual abuse reported in India in 2021⁴. Furthermore, a report by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) found that India accounted for 11% of the global online child sexual abuse material detected in 2021⁵. The nature of OSEAC in India is complex and multifaceted, involving various forms of exploitation, including child sexual abuse material, online grooming, and sextortion. Perpetrators often use social media platforms, online gaming, and chat rooms to target and exploit children, who are often vulnerable and lack the necessary skills and knowledge to protect themselves online.

Studies have shown that children from all backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses are vulnerable to OSEAC, although those from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more susceptible due to lack of access to education, poverty, and social isolation. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of OSEAC, as children spend more time online and away from the safety net of their homes, schools, and parents.

Despite the gravity of the issue, there is a lack of comprehensive research on OSEAC in India, particularly at the state level. Existing studies have primarily focused on urban areas, with limited attention to rural areas where access to technology and digital literacy may be limited.

1.1.3 Legislative Framework in India for Addressing OSEAC

India has several laws addressing Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC). Primarily under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012**, online sexual abuse, including grooming and child pornography are criminalised. The **Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000** penalizes the creation, distribution, and storage of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), while the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** includes provisions against cyberstalking, sexual harassment, and trafficking. The **Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015** provides mechanisms for child protection and rehabilitation, and the **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal** allows online reporting of OSEAC cases. Additionally, government bodies like the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** and state commissions monitor child safety online.

⁴ National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). (2021). Crime in India 2020. Retrieved from [NCRB](<https://www.ncrb.gov.in/uploads/nationalcrimerecordsbureau/custom/1696831798CII2021Volume1.pdf>).

⁵ Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). (2021). Annual Report 2020. Retrieved from [IWF] (<https://annualreport2021.iwf.org.uk>)

Despite these laws, gaps remain in enforcement, victim support and delay in justice. Many cases go unreported due to lack of awareness or fear of social stigma. Law enforcement agencies often lack specialized training and technological tools to track online offenders effectively. The IT Act does not comprehensively address emerging threats like AI-generated CSAM and encrypted platforms that enable anonymous abuse. Inconsistent implementation of laws across states, delays in prosecution, and inadequate victim rehabilitation services further weaken the framework.

Internationally, countries like the **Philippines** have strong legal frameworks to combat OSEAC. The **Anti-Child Pornography Act, 2009**, and the **Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) Act, 2022**, impose strict penalties on offenders and require internet service providers to actively monitor and report CSAM. The **United Kingdom's Online Safety Act, 2023**, mandates tech companies to prevent and swiftly remove harmful content, while **Australia's eSafety Commissioner** enforces stringent measures against online abuse. The **United States' PROTECT Act** enables proactive law enforcement investigations through its **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)**. India can learn from these models by enhancing proactive monitoring, mandating stronger compliance from tech platforms, and strengthening victim-centered legal and rehabilitation frameworks.

1.2 The Rationale of the Study

The online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC) is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive and nuanced understanding. Despite the gravity of the issue, there is a significant lack of research on OSEAC at the state level in India, leading to gaps in knowledge about regional variations and specific challenges. This study aimed to address this knowledge gap by conducting a detailed study on OSEAC in Karnataka.

The rationale for this study was rooted in the need to understand the prevalence, forms, and manifestations of OSEAC among children in India. The study seemed to explore various factors contributing to the vulnerability of children to OSEAC, such as digital technology, social media, and online platforms. By examining the experiences of children who have been victims of OSEAC, this study provides a nuanced understanding of its impact on their physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, this study was motivated by the need to inform the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies. By identifying gaps and limitations in existing policies and programs, this study provides actionable recommendations for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and child protection organizations to prevent the exploitation and abuse of children online.



Additionally, the study was driven by the need to promote a culture of safety and respect for children's rights in India. Raising awareness about the issue of OSEAC and its consequences aims to foster a culture of zero tolerance for child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Overall, the rationale for this study is to contribute to the growing body of research on OSEAC and to inform the development of effective strategies to prevent the exploitation and abuse of children online in India.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study was to explore the nature and prevalence of OSEAC in order to better understand the risk and vulnerability factors and develop effective intervention strategies.

- Estimate the prevalence of OSEAC among children aged 8 to 18 years in Karnataka
- Identify the various forms of exploitation and abuse of OSEAC encountered by children between 8 to 18 years in Karnataka
- Examine the key risk factors that contribute to the vulnerability of children to OSEAC in Karnataka
- Inform the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies to address OSEAC in Karnataka

2

Study Approach & Methodology

The study adopted a well-structured approach for undertaking various key activities to complete the study. The following section outlines the theoretical framework and sampling methodology that acted as a guide for different work components.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in the **Ecological Systems Theory (EST)**, which asserts that various environmental levels influence children's development and well-being, including microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This framework particularly relevant to the investigation on Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) as it acknowledges the intricate interplay between individual, social, and environmental factors contributing to children's vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

In this study, the EST was applied to examine the interplay of various factors influencing OSEAC in Karnataka in India, considering both individual and contextual factors. This framework was also utilized to identify microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem factors that increase children's risk of being exploited or abused online, as well as factors that protect them from such exploitation and abuse. The EST was explored in the following ways:

- **At the Individual Level (Microsystem):** At this level, the personal characteristics, experiences, and behaviours of children, perpetrators, and other individuals involved in OSEAC were explored. These concepts were operationalised by identifying specific indicators for measuring psychological factors and assessing their impact on online behaviours and susceptibility to exploitation and abuse.
- **Examining Interactions and Relationships (Mesosystem):** At this level, the influence of relationships within children's immediate environments, including family, peers, schools, and communities, on their susceptibility to OSEAC were examined. How interactions between different microsystems shape children's exposure to and protection from online sexual exploitation and abuse was also explored. Operationalizing concepts such as parental supervision, communication patterns, and peer dynamics allowed to assess their role in mitigating or exacerbating the risk of OSEAC.

- **Analyzing Social Settings and Institutions (Exosystem):** Here the role of external systems, such as educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and child protection services, in addressing OSEAC in Karnataka was explored. The availability and effectiveness of preventive measures, reporting mechanisms, and support services provided by these institutions were also taken into consideration. Further, these concepts were operationalized by assessing the accessibility, responsiveness, and quality of services offered to address OSEAC incidents.
- **Exploring Socio-Cultural Factors (Macrosystem):** At this level, the influence of cultural norms, values, and beliefs on attitudes toward gender, sexuality, and OSEAC was assessed. How socio-cultural factors shape reporting patterns, stigma, and shame associated with OSEAC incidents in Karnataka was studied. Operationalizing concepts also involved identifying specific cultural norms and values prevalent in the study context and examining their impact on help-seeking behaviours and community responses to OSEAC.
- **Exploring historical events (Chronosystem):** This level consists of all of the experiences that a person has had during his or her lifetime, including environmental events, major life transitions, and historical events such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

By actively applying the EST and operationalizing its concepts within the study design and data collection process, the agency aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors contributing to children's vulnerability to OSEAC in India.

2.2 Research Design

In this study on Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC), a cross-sectional, exploratory research design with a comparative study component was employed. This approach was chosen to comprehensively examine and compare the prevalence, forms, and risk factors of OSEAC among 8-11 year old, 12-14 year old and 15-18 year old children in Karnataka. The cross-sectional design involved the collection of data at a single point in time – estimating the prevalence of OSEAC among children. The exploratory aspect of the design allowed for the identification of new variables and hypotheses that can be tested in future studies. The comparative study component focused on identifying and analyzing differences and similarities between various groups within the study population – based on geography, gender, age, and other socio-cultural characteristics – to assess how different online behaviours and patterns of internet usage correlate with the risk of OSEAC. Different tools were developed and administered to different target respondent groups with some common questions to derive comparison over some basic indicators.

By including "exploratory" in the research design, the study aimed to explore a new topic or phenomenon, generate hypotheses, and identify research questions for future studies.

2.3 Data Collection Methods and Tools

A range of data collection methods and tools were developed to gather comprehensive and nuanced information for this study on Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC). The methods included secondary data collection, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and structured questionnaire surveys - each designed to capture different aspects of the issue.

2.3.1 Secondary Data Collection

The study began with secondary data collection to gather existing information from a variety of sources. **Academic studies** were reviewed to gain insights from previous research on OSEAC, focusing on the prevalence, patterns, and factors contributing to online exploitation. Relevant data and statistics were collected from the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**, **state police departments**, and other relevant **law enforcement agencies**. This included obtaining statistics on **reported cases of online exploitation**, detailed **case studies** etc. Specific data from these sources helped understand the scale of the issue, identify trends, and examine the effectiveness of current policies and interventions.

2.3.2 Primary Data Collection – Qualitative Method

To gather original data, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed. These methods provided detailed and rich information on personal experiences, perceptions, and systemic factors related to OSEAC.

In-depth interviews (IDIs)/ Semi-structures Interviews (SSIs) were conducted with a range of key stakeholders. This included representatives from the State Commission for Protection of Children Rights, Law enforcement agencies including Juvenile Justice Boards, Police Department, Cyber Crime Department, Child Rights Committees, etc. In addition to them, officials of prominent NGOs/ CSOs working in the domain of OSEAC, academicians from prominent institutions working in related subjects, etc. were interviewed to develop a more nuanced understanding of the OSEAC ecosystem in the respective states. These stakeholders offered professional and systemic perspectives on OSEAC, including challenges in prevention and intervention, and insights into the effectiveness of existing policies and measures.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with **community members like PRI members, members of Yuva Mangal Dals, or other knowledgeable persons** to explore the **online behaviours of children in 8 to 18 years group, experiences, and perceptions** of online sexual exploitation and abuse. This helped in understanding how children interact with digital platforms and what specific risks they encounter. FGDs also provided insights into their **awareness** of OSEAC, their **strategies** for monitoring and protecting their children online, and their **perceptions** of the effectiveness of current measures.

2.3.3 Primary Data Collection - Quantitative Method

The quantitative data collection method involved a **Structured Questionnaire Survey (SQS)**. The survey was administered to a sample of caregivers/parents, and children aged 8-18 years including school going children studying in classes 3rd to 12th as well as out of school children in the same age group. The survey gathered information on their online **behaviours, experiences, and perceptions** of online sexual exploitation and abuse. The survey also collected specific information on the **prevalence** of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children, as well as the individual, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem **factors** that contribute to children's vulnerability to online sexual exploitation and abuse.

In addition to the above, **semi-structured surveys** were conducted with School Teachers to inquire into their understanding and experience with the topics in question. These interviews captured detailed narratives of their personal experiences with victims/ parents of victims/ volunteers working in the sector, insights into the psychological and emotional impacts of OSEAC, and professional assessments of the current systems in place to protect children from OSEAC.

The quantitative data collection tools after translation into local language were pretested in a pilot stud to fine-tune the flow of questions and the language. A total number of 18 students, 6 from each age category and ensuring equal gender distribution, were interviewed as part of the pilot study. This allowed to check for any gaps, inconsistencies, ambiguities, etc., and other sources of bias & errors. In particular, the pilot testing assessed the following:

- Flow of questionnaires
- Clarity of questions asked
- Correctness of skip patterns for ensuring continuity among different sections
- Comprehensiveness in terms of information coverage
- Simplicity of the language used in framing questions

2.4 Sampling Methodology

2.4.1 Study Area

In terms of districts, the study in Karnataka was conducted in Raichur, Chikkamangaluru, Chamarajanagar, Belagavi, and Bengaluru Urban.

2.4.2 Sample Size Estimation

As mentioned in the preceding sections, this survey attempted to generate representative and reliable evidence with regard to the awareness levels, prevalence, and experiences of various stakeholders about Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) at the state level. The sample size for the

last mile respondents, that is, the school going and out of school children had been worked out using the standard statistical formula. Taking a conservative approach, the p value is assumed at 50% and the margin of error (d) has been kept at $\pm 5\%$ at 95% level of confidence. A design effect (DE) of 2 has also been accounted for, considering the multi-stage clustered sampling design. Using the formula below, the required sample size was estimated to be 800 respondents per state. After taking an inflation factor of 10% to account for non-response bias, the **overall state-level sample has been proposed at 900 children in the age group of 8 to 18 years.**

$$n = \frac{4pq * DE}{d^2}$$

The following sections detail the sample coverage, and the approach adopted for sampling.

2.4.3 Sample Distribution in Karnataka

The Table 2.1 presents an overview of the distribution of the sample by the type of respondent, type of data collection tool, and level of data collection:

Table 2.1: Sample Distribution					
Level	Respondent	Tool	Sampling Criteria	Sample size/district	Sample size/state
PSU	Children between 8 to 11 years of age	Structured Questionnaire Survey	10 per PSU	60	300
	Children between 12 to 14 years of age		10 per PSU	60	300
	Children between 15 to 18 years of age		10 per PSU	60	300
	Out of School Children in 8 to 18 years of age		2 per PSU	12	60
	Parent/Caregivers of children aged 8 to 18 years of age		10 per PSU	60	300
	Teachers	Semi-structured Interviews	2 per PSU (1 Male Teacher+1 Female Teacher)	12	60
District	Community Representatives including PRI members/Community volunteers like Shiksha mitra/ Yuva mangal dal representatives	Focus Group Discussions	1 per District	1	5

Table 2.1: Sample Distribution

Level	Respondent	Tool	Sampling Criteria	Sample size/district	Sample size/state
	District-level Officials from different Departments (Cyber Crime/CWC/ JJB/ Police/ Special Juvenile Police Unit)	Semi-structured Interviews	7 per district	7	35
	DCPU Officials	In-depth Interviews	1 per district	1	5
State	State-level consultation with SCPCR	Consultative discussion	1 per state	-	1
	State-level Officials from different Departments (WCD/ Education/ Health/Mental Health/ PRI)	In-Depth Interviews	5 per state	-	5
	Representatives of NGOs/ Child Rights Experts/ Academicians working in domain of Child Rights		2 per state	-	2

2.5 Sampling Strategy

A **multi-stage stratified random sampling** approach was adopted to draw the required number of samples for this study. In the first stage, **five districts from Karnataka were selected**. In the next stage, schools of various types were sampled from the rural and urban areas, which constituted the **Second-stage Sampling Units (SSUs)**. In the third stage, individual respondents were sampled, who constituted the **Ultimate Sampling Units (USUs)** in the study. The method of selection adopted for each stage is described ahead –

2.5.1 Selection of First-Stage Sampling Units

For district selection, a vulnerability score was created for each of the districts. The reported prevalence rates of crimes such as kidnapping/abduction, cases under the POSCO Act and cybercrime were considered as the basis for selecting districts, in line with the study topic. These were extracted from National Crime Records Bureau. In addition, indicators like extent of urbanization of districts (Census 2011), and literacy rates (Census 2011) in the districts, were considered for developing the vulnerability score. Composite index scores were calculated to stratify the districts in 4 quartiles and one district was sampled randomly from each quartile ensuring geographical spread across the State. In addition, one metropolitan city was purposively sampled from each state to ensure representation of highly urbanized context which is subject to enhanced vulnerability to OSEAC.



District Name	Extent of Urbanisation (Census 2011)	Urbanization Percentile Score	Total Crimes Against Children (NCRB)	Crime Percentile Score	Literacy Rate (Census 2011)	Literacy Reverse Scoring	Total Scores	Vulnerability strata
Belgaum	26%	46.6	210	66.8	73.9	16.59	130.1	Strata 4
Chikmagalur	22%	38.8	198	64.2	79.2	10.61	113.6	Strata 3
Raichur	25%	44.7	86	27.4	60.5	31.72	103.8	Strata 2
Chamarajanagar	17%	30.2	69	25.3	61.1	31.04	86.5	Strata 1 (lowest)
Bangalore	91%		1422		88.5			Highest urbanization

2.5.2 Selection of Second-Stage Sampling Units

The schools offering secondary and senior secondary education constituted the second stage sampling units for the purpose of this study. All types of schools that vary by type of management (Government/ Private/ Charitable trusts, Missionary managed), staff strength (student-teacher ratio), location (rural/urban), and type of schools (Only Girls, Only Boys, Co-education) were included. A complete list of schools in the sampled districts were drawn from the DISE database which served as the sampling frame for this stage. However, it should be noted that as DISE registration has not yet been made mandatory by the Department of Education, and therefore many religious, spiritual and trust schools may not be a part of DISE.

Considering a cluster size of 30 children, sample 30 sampling units in the next stage, covering 6 SSUs per district for 5 districts in each of the 3 states. These 6 SSUs/ schools were sampled ensuring proportionate representation of varied variety of schools in the sample. The required number of schools were sampled from each category using systematic random sampling.

2.5.3 Selection of Ultimate Sampling Units

Three categories of respondents were covered at the SSU level - **School-going and out-of-school children aged 8 to 18 years, parents of children in the said age group, and schoolteachers** in the sampled schools.

For **sampling the first group of respondents, that is, school going children and out of school children between 8 to 18 years**, the sample of 30 per SSU was split into three sub-categories – 10 Children from 8 to 11 years, 10 Children between 12 to 14 years, and 10 Children from 15 to 18 years and 2 out of school children. For sampling the school going children, the attendance registers of students from classes 3rd to 12th were obtained from the Head Teachers of the sampled schools. A total of 60



students in the required age category were given consent forms to be signed by their parents. From those who got consent, a total of 30 students were selected using simple random sampling. While drawing the sample, it was ensured to get equal representation of both boys and girls and across all class groups and age groups. For the out of school girls and boys, a snowball sampling approach was adopted within a radius of 2 kms around the sampled schools. For this, one boy and one girl in this group was sampled from the catchment area of each school.

The **second category of target respondents include parents of children** in the said age group. As mentioned above, a sample of total 10 parents from the catchment area of each school were selected for the study. In case of schools that have a functional school management committee, details of member parents from the school were obtained, and then 10 parents were randomly sampled from that list ensuring fair representation of both, mothers and fathers in the sample. It was also ensured that the sampled parents equally represent the different age groups of children being studied (8 to 11 / 12 to 14/ 15 to 18). In cases where school Management Committees are not constituted, the parents were found from the communities near school.

The **third category of target respondents constitute of teachers** at the sampled schools. The semi-structured interviews were administered to two teachers.

2.6 Sample Coverage in Karnataka

The Table 2.2 provides details of the sample coverage against targets in Karnataka. Except for the category of out-of-school children, the target sample size was met. Out of the targeted 60 respondents, only 24 out-of-school children were covered, primarily due to high gross enrolment rates in the districts. According to the Annual Status of Education Report 2022, the enrolment rate for children aged 7–16 years in Karnataka stands at 99.5%⁶

Districts	8–11-year-old school going children (60 per district)	12–14-year-old school going children (60 per district)	15–18-year-old school going children (60 per district)	Out of school Children (12 per district)	Parents of children aged 8 – 18 years (60 per district)
Belagavi	62	60	60	1	60
Bengaluru U	60	60	61	7	60
Chamarajanagara	60	63	60	6	62
Chikkamangaluru	60	57	61	8	60
Raichur	60	60	60	8	60
Total	301	300	302	24	302

⁶ ASER 2022. Annual Status of Education Report (Rural). Retrieved from asercentre.org. [<https://asercentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/aserreport2022-1.pdf>]

Table 2.3: Qualitative Survey Coverage					
Districts	FGDs (1 per district)	IDIs of District officials (7 per district)	IDI of DCPU officials (1 per district)	IDIs of State Officials (5 per state)	IDIs of NGOs/ Academicians (2 per state)
Belagavi	1	7	1	1	2
Bengaluru U	1	7	1		
Chamarajanagara	1	7	1		
Chikkamangaluru	1	7	1		
Raichur	1	7	1		
Total	5	35	5	1	2

2.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved an integration of data using statistical techniques and coding of qualitative data. The information collected from the primary and secondary sources were triangulated to get an insight into the underlying factors behind the results obtained.

The **Quantitative Data** collected through CAPI devices were converted into SPSS formats, specifying the variable names and value labels for each field. Further, consistency checks were run on the data and the data was cleaned to make it fit for generating reliable estimates to meet the purpose of this study. **The data was analysed using SPSS** version 25 to generate desired estimates, fact sheets, tables and graphs.

For the analysis of **Qualitative Data** gathered, the first step was verbatim transcription. The transcribed information was then scrutinized for its primary as well as latent content. Listing, coding and summarising was done to arrive at meaningful insights.

2.8 Ethical Policies Adopted while Interviewing Children

2.8.1 Consenting Process

The questionnaires developed for the study were carefully reviewed by the ChildFund team and the Karnataka SCPSR to ensure the language and questions were age appropriate. Necessary permissions were obtained from relevant authorities, including District Education Officers and Block Education Officers. Additionally, the field team sought approval from school principals and management.



Subsequently, 60 students (30 female and 30 male) were provided with bilingual consent forms. These forms clearly outlined the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, and the confidentiality measures in place. Students were instructed to share these forms with their parents and obtain parental consent. Out of the students who returned signed consent forms, 30 were randomly selected to participate in the study. Before proceeding, assent was obtained from the selected students to confirm their willingness to take part.

For out-of-school children, Research Investigators (RIs) directly approached the parents to seek consent. Once parental consent was granted, assent was obtained from the children themselves.

2.8.2 Benefits and Risks

Participants did not receive any direct personal benefits, such as monetary or material rewards, for participating in this study. However, the study's findings aim to provide indirect benefits by contributing to efforts that support families, assist victims of online sexual abuse, and address challenges faced by young people.

Some questions in the interviews addressed sensitive topics that could feel personal or uncomfortable to some participants. Respondents were given the complete freedom to skip any questions they did not wish to answer. The RIs conducted interviews with empathy, offering a listening ear to any negative experiences shared by children or their parents.

2.8.3 Confidentiality

The information collected during the survey is intended to improve child protection, promote safer internet practices, and enhance support for victims and their families. All quantitative and qualitative data collected from relevant stakeholders shall be subject to the highest level of confidentiality. For the same, all information collected from the respondents shall be duly de-identified in order to masquerade all personal information that can reveal the identity of research subjects. To ensure confidentiality, all identifying details were removed from the data and replaced with unique codes. Access to the datasets was restricted to the team lead and the data analyst, maintaining strict data security protocols. Under no circumstances, the data analyst/team lead shall be allowed to share the personal information of the research subjects with any external or internal source, except for complying with any statutory/ legal requirement of Central / State / Local Self-Help Government through the Director of the Academy of Management Studies (AMS).

2.8.4 Privacy

Privacy was maintained in various ways. Even though interviews were conducted in schools for school going children, these were conducted in private rooms where other students or teachers had no access to during the interviews. For the older age groups, the tool was self-administered for ensuring privacy and confidentiality.



2.8.5 Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Children faced no pressure to join the interviews and were free to decline at any point. Even after parents provided consent, children were required to give their assent before participating, reinforcing their right to make an independent decision.

2.9 Challenges and Limitations of the Study

1. Sampling Bias:

- The study faced challenges in ensuring a representative sample, particularly among out-of-school children who were harder to reach compared to school-going children. This led to an underrepresentation of key vulnerable groups.

2. Stigma and Sensitivity:

- The topic of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) is sensitive, and participants might be hesitant to disclose personal or observed experiences, leading to underreporting. Children, might have provided socially desirable responses rather than honest ones, especially given the sensitive nature of the topic.

3. Cultural and Regional Differences:

- The study did not account for cultural, regional, or socio-economic factors that influence the understanding, prevalence, and reporting of OSEAC. This could affect the generalizability of findings.
- Limited resources, time, or access to certain populations (e.g., rural areas or marginalized groups) restricted the depth and breadth of the study.

4. Complexity of Factors:

- The study struggled to comprehensively capture the multifaceted nature of OSEAC, including technological, psychological, and societal dimensions that contribute to its prevalence.

5. Logistical Constraints:

- Getting necessary approvals and permissions from district level and block level officials were time consuming, which caused significant delays in study timelines.

2.10 Contributions of Karnataka SCPCR

The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR), in collaboration with ChildFund India, played a pivotal role in shaping the study methodology and finalizing the sampling



framework. Their expertise and insights ensured that the study design was robust and sensitive to the specific context and demographics of the region.

The Karnataka SCPCR meticulously reviewed all quantitative and qualitative tools developed for the study to ensure their appropriateness, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. This review process was critical in ensuring that the tools were effective in capturing nuanced data related to the prevalence, risk factors, and vulnerabilities associated with Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC). Additionally, the SCPCR reviewed the Kannada translations of these tools to ensure linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and clarity for participants across diverse backgrounds.

Further, the Karnataka SCPCR provided support in facilitating the logistical aspects of the study. They helped in securing appointments and permissions for conducting qualitative interviews with district and state officials.

3

Profile of The Respondents

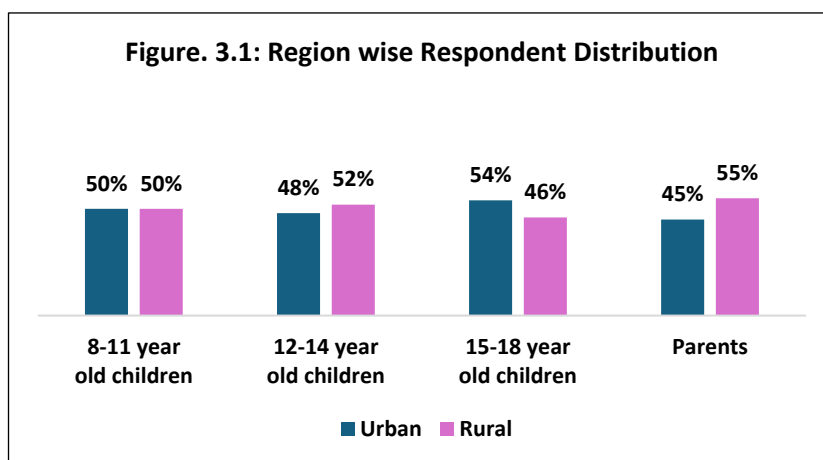
This chapter presents data on the key socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the households and respondents surveyed. Demographic statistics are essential for profiling communities based on socio-economic parameters, as they provide valuable insights into the prevalence and incidence of OSEAC cases within the community. This information is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders in formulating policies and designing effective programs. The sections that follow offer a comparative analysis of the primary socio-demographic and economic features of the households and sampled respondents.

3.1 Socio Demographic Profile of the Respondents

3.1.1 Region

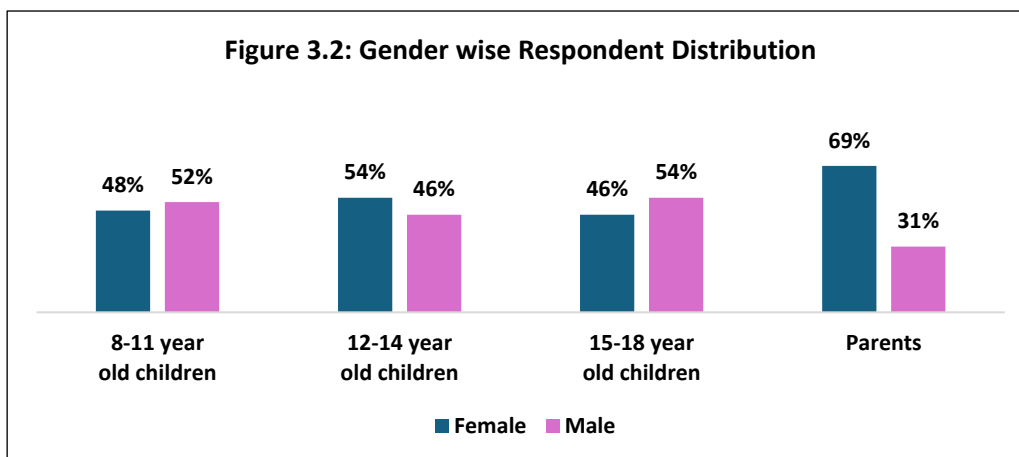
As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the data shows a slight shift in population distribution between urban and rural areas across different age groups. For the 8-11 years group, the split was equal, with both urban and rural areas at 50%. While in the 12-14 years group, a marginally higher percentage of 52% children

were interviewed from rural areas, in the 15-18 years category, more children were interviewed from urban areas (54%). Notably, more parents were (55%) interviewed from rural areas.



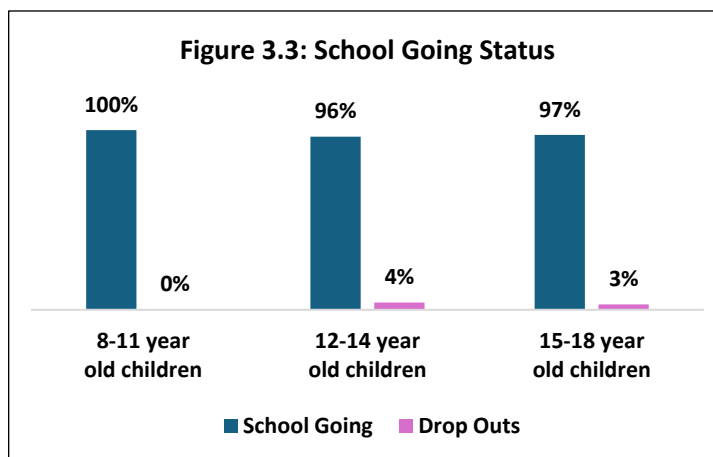
3.1.2 Gender

Figure 3.2 highlights gender distribution among respondents across different age groups. In the 8-11 years group, slightly more male (52%) children were interviewed than children. For the 12-14 years group, females become the majority, accounting for 54% of the respondents compared to 46% males. This trend reversed in the 15-18 years group, where males dominated at 54% versus 46% females. Among parents, mothers formed a significant majority (69%) of the respondents, while fathers accounted for only 31%.

Figure 3.2: Gender wise Respondent Distribution

3.1.3 School Going Status

Against the target of 60 out of school children the survey could cover only 24 owing to very low drop-out rate in Karnataka. Figure 3.3 describes the age distribution of the school going and drop-out children. Only one out of school child was interviewed in the 8-11 year category. Among 12-14 years, 4% of them were drop-outs and similarly, among the 15-18 years, 3% of them were out of school.

Figure 3.3: School Going Status

3.1.4 Occupation of Parents

Table 3.1: Occupation of Parents/Guardians

Occupation of Father	8-11 year old children	12-14 year old children	15-18 year old children
1. Agriculture or Animal Husbandry	24%	23%	28%
2. Landless labourer, Domestic Worker	35%	33%	29%
3. Run own Business (shops, etc.)	17%	17%	17%
4. Salaried employed (govt/pvt jobs)	18%	21%	18%
5. Self Employed (Doctor/CA/ Free lance work)	2%	2%	2%
6. Not engaged in any income generating activity	0%	2%	1%

Table 3.1: Occupation of Parents/Guardians

Occupation of Father	8-11 year old children	12-14 year old children	15-18 year old children
7. Not available	4%	3%	6%
Occupation of Mother	8-11 year old children	12-14 year old children	15-18 year old children
1. Agriculture or Animal Husbandry	7%	13%	9%
2. Landless labourer/ domestic worker	22%	24%	23%
3. Run own Business (shops, etc.)	7%	9%	5%
4. Salaried employed (govt/pvt jobs)	13%	15%	13%
5. Self Employed (Doctor/CA/ Freelance work)	2%	1%	2%
6. Homemaker/ housewife	50%	35%	47%
7. Not available	0%	4%	2%
Both the parents are working	46%	58%	46%

Data on occupation of parents for children aged 8-18 years highlights key economic and social patterns. Among fathers, the most common occupation was landless labor or domestic work, accounting for around 30%. This suggests a significant portion of families rely on daily wage or informal labor. Agriculture and animal husbandry followed closely at about 25%, indicating a large rural presence where farming remains a primary livelihood.

For mothers, the data revealed that nearly half of them were homemakers, underscoring the traditional gender roles prevalent in many households. Around 22% engaged in landless labor or domestic work, reflecting economic necessity. Additional analysis revealed that half of the children (50%) interviewed in this study had both parents working.

3.1.5 Family Members

Average number of family members of the household of the interviewed children in Karnataka was 5, with an average of 2 earning members and 2 children.

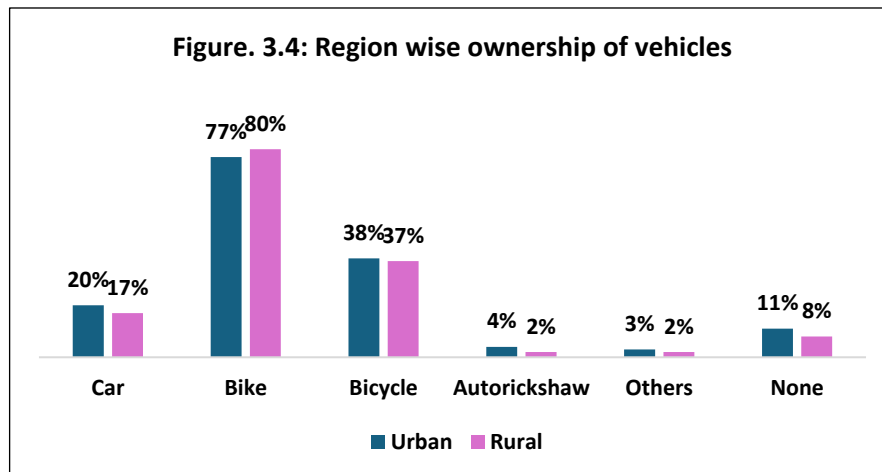
Table 3.2: Family Members

Family members	Minimum	Maximum	Average
No. of Members in the Family	2	20	5
No. of Earning Members in the Family	0	10	2
No. of Children in the Family	1	10	2

3.2 Socio-Economic Profile

3.2.1 Ownership of Vehicles

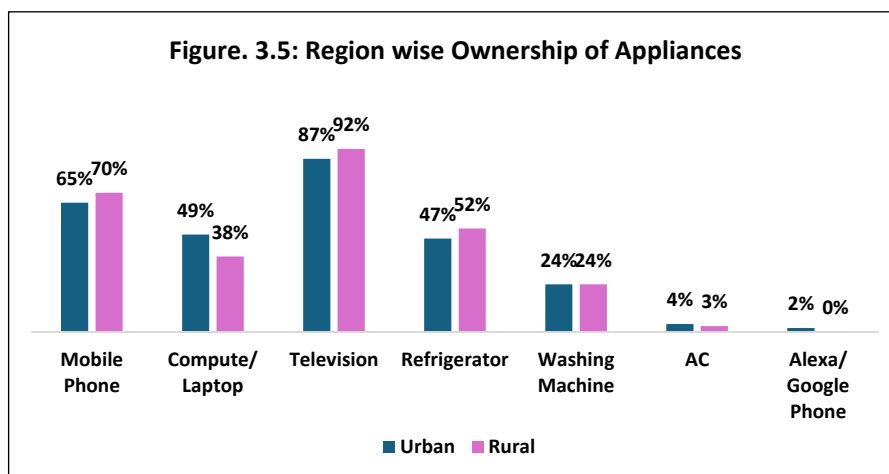
The data illustrated in figure 3.4 reveals vehicle ownership patterns across urban and rural regions. Cars were slightly more common in urban areas (20%) compared to rural areas (17%). In contrast, bikes dominated as the most widely owned vehicle, with 77% ownership in urban areas and an even higher 80% in rural regions. Bicycles showed near-equal distribution, with 38% ownership in urban areas and 37% in rural ones. Autorickshaws and other types of vehicles were rare, but slightly more prevalent in urban areas (4% and 3%, respectively) than in rural areas (2% each). A notable 11% of urban households reported owning no vehicle, compared to 8% in rural regions, reflecting a higher dependency on vehicles in rural settings.



Bikes dominated as the most widely owned vehicle, with 77% ownership in urban areas and an even higher 80% in rural regions. Bicycles showed near-equal distribution, with 38% ownership in urban areas and 37% in rural ones. Autorickshaws and other types of vehicles were rare, but slightly more prevalent in urban areas (4% and 3%, respectively) than in rural areas (2% each). A notable 11% of urban households reported owning no vehicle, compared to 8% in rural regions, reflecting a higher dependency on vehicles in rural settings.

3.2.2 Ownership of Appliances

The data in figure 3.5 highlights the ownership of appliances across urban and rural regions. Mobile phones were more commonly owned in rural areas (70%) than in urban areas (65%). Computers and laptops showed higher ownership in urban areas (49%) compared to rural ones (38%). Televisions were the most widely owned appliance, with slightly greater ownership in rural areas (92%) than urban areas (87%). Refrigerators were also more prevalent in rural regions (52%) compared to urban areas (47%). Washing machines were equally owned in both regions, with 24% ownership. Air conditioners were slightly more common in urban areas (4%) than rural ones (3%), while smart devices like Alexa or Google Home were almost exclusively found in urban areas (2%) and virtually absent in rural areas.



Televisions were the most widely owned appliance, with slightly greater ownership in rural areas (92%) than urban areas (87%). Refrigerators were also more prevalent in rural regions (52%) compared to urban areas (47%). Washing machines were equally owned in both regions, with 24% ownership. Air conditioners were slightly more common in urban areas (4%) than rural ones (3%), while smart devices like Alexa or Google Home were almost exclusively found in urban areas (2%) and virtually absent in rural areas. This data reflects subtle but notable differences in appliance adoption between the two regions.

4

Vulnerability Factors and Usage of Web Platforms

4.1 Relationships Held by Children

The relationships held by children vis a vis their primary caregiver and friends would have an influence on their vulnerability. For instance, if a child's primary caregiver is an elder sibling who is also a child, their online activities may not be monitored properly. If a child does not have many friends, the need for friendships may make them more vulnerable to predation.

4.1.1 Primary Caregiver

The Table 4.1 highlights the distribution of caregivers for children across three age categories, 8–11, 12–14, and 15–18 years. Mothers were the primary caregivers in all age groups, though their role declines during early adolescence (12–14 years) before increasing again in late adolescence. Siblings, particularly older ones, also took on a considerable caregiving role, which was highest in the 12–14 age range. Fathers also played a significant but smaller role, with their involvement peaking in the 12–14 age group and then declining. This data reflects the evolving dynamics of caregiving as children age.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Children Based on Primary Caregiver

Caregiver	8 to 11 year old children	12 to 14 year old children	15 to 18 year old children
Father	13.6%	17.6%	9.9%
Mother	62.3%	49.8%	58.3%
Grandfather	2.3%	2.2%	1.0%
Grandmother	4.0%	8.3%	6.4%
Uncle	0.3%	0.6%	0.3%
Aunt	0.3%	0%	0.6%
Other adult relative	2.0%	2.6%	4.8%
Sibling (child)	13.9%	18.8%	16.3%
Other	1.3%	0%	2.2%

4.1.2 Friends

The youngest group had an average of 7 friends and both the older age groups had an average of 8 friends each.

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of children across three age groups—8 to 11, 12 to 14, and 15 to 18 years—based on the places where they form friendships. School emerged as the most significant setting for forming friendships across all age groups, with the highest percentage (87.2%) in the 12–14 age group. Neighbourhood friendships remained stable but show a slight increase among older children (15–18 years). Online friendships were minimal, observed only in a small fraction of adolescents aged 12- to 18 years. This data reflects on the dominant role of school as a social hub for children and adolescents.

It was noted that, across all age groups, a significantly higher proportion of male children formed friendships outside of school compared to their female counterparts. Similarly, in the two younger age categories a significantly higher share of children from urban regions formed friendships outside of school compared to children from rural areas.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Children Based on Place of Forming Friendship			
Place	8 to 11 year old children	12 to 14 year old children	15 to 18 year old children
School	82.8%	87.2%	82.3%
Outside school (tuitions, sports coaching, etc.)	8.6%	4.5%	6.1%
Neighborhood	8.6%	7.3%	11.3%
Online	0%	0.3%	0.3%
Other	0%	0.6%	0%

More than three quarters (76%) of the parents knew the name of their child's best friend, while a third of them were aware about the address where the friend lived. Similarly, more than two thirds of the parents were also knowledgeable if their ward has any online friends

4.1.3 Trusted Confidants of Children

Trusted confidants like parents, siblings, friends, and mentors are important to children because they help build resilience and develop healthy habits.

“Children generally trust friends and relatives more. And they are confident. So, there is a possibility of criminals among friends/ relatives misguiding innocent children and involving them in their work”

– District official

For 8-11-year-olds, parents/guardians were the most trusted confidants. This age group went to them when they needed help at school, were afraid, or upset. The data highlights the significant role of **parents/guardians as trusted confidants** for 8–11-year-olds, with the majority of children turning to them when happy (77.2%) or in trouble (78.1%). However, their role diminishes slightly when it came to sharing secrets (52.0%) or approaching them in embarrassing situations (58.6%).

Friends emerged as a key confidant for sharing secrets (30.5%) and dealing with embarrassment (24.2%). Notably, **online friends and teachers/mentors played only a minimal role** as confidants in this age group.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Children Based on Trusted Confidants (8–11-year-old children)

Confidant	Go to when happy	Go to when In Trouble	Tell secrets to	Approach when Embarrassed
Parents/Guardians	77.2%	78.1%	52.0%	58.6%
Sibling	9.9%	7.6%	11.3%	9.6%
Other relatives	4.0%	2.0%	2.3%	2.6%
Friends	8.6%	10.9%	30.5%	24.2%
Online friends	0	0	0.7%	0
Teachers/Mentors	0	1.3%	0.7%	0.7%
Others	0	0	0	0
No one	0.3%	0	2.6%	4.3%

The data reveals a noticeable shift in trusted confidants for **12–14-year-olds** compared to younger children. **Parents/guardians remained the primary confidants**, especially in times of trouble (68%) and happiness (66%), but their role diminished significantly for sharing secrets (39%).

Friends gained importance as confidants, equalling parents for secret-sharing (39%) and being a preferred choice in embarrassing situations (24%). **Siblings also saw an increased role**, particularly for secret-sharing (17%). This data highlights the growing influence of peers and the gradual shift away from parents as children enter adolescence.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Children Based on Trusted Confidants (12–14-year-old children)

Confidant	Go to when happy	Go to when In Trouble	Tell secrets to	Approach when Embarrassed
Parents/Guardians	66.1%	68.1%	39.0%	58.5%
Sibling	14.4%	12.1%	17.3%	9.3%
Other relatives	1.3%	1.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Friends	18.2%	17.6%	39.3%	24.3%
Online friends	0	0	0	0
Teachers/Mentors	0	0.6%	0	2.6%
Others	0	0	0	0
No one	0	0	3.8%	4.8%

The data for **15–18-year-olds** showed a significant shift in trusted confidants as adolescents increasingly turn to **friends** over parents. **Friends were the most trusted confidants for sharing secrets (49%) and dealing with embarrassment (44%),** surpassing parents in these areas. However, **parents/guardians remained a key support** when adolescents were happy (53%) or in trouble (59%), though their role has diminished compared to younger age groups.

Across all age groups it was noted that a **significantly higher proportion of girl children** approached their parents/guardians in situations of happiness, trouble, embarrassment etc. compared to boy children.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Children Based on Trusted Confidants (15-18 year olds children)

Confidant	Go to when happy	Go to when In Trouble	Tell secrets to	Approach when Embarrassed
Parents/Guardians	53.2%	58.7%	29.2%	41.0%
Sibling	13.1%	9.9%	15.7%	8.0%
Other relatives	0.3%	0.3%	1.3%	1.0%
Friends	31.4%	29.8%	49.4%	43.9%
Online friends	0	0.3%	0.6%	0
Teachers/Mentors	1.0%	0	0.3%	1.0%
Others	0.3%	0	0	0
No one	0.6%	0.9%	3.5%	5.1%

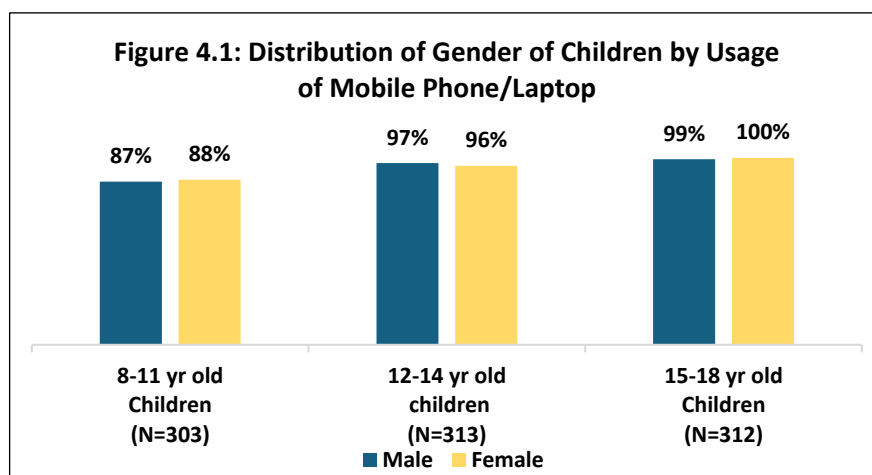
Bivariate analysis was conducted to examine the relationships of children with both parents engaged in income-generating activities compared to those with only one parent involved. The data revealed no significant difference in the relationships or trusted confidants between these two groups of children.

4.2 Usage of Electronic Devices

4.2.1 Usage of Mobile Phone/ Laptop

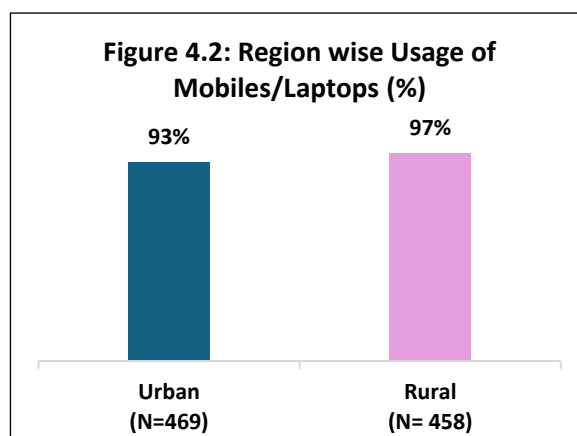
The data shows that mobile phone and laptop usage was prevalent among children across all age groups, with the percentage increasing as children grew older. Among 8–11-year-olds, usage was already high, with 87% reporting access.

This demonstrates that even at a young age, the majority of children were engaging with digital devices. By the 12–14 age group, usage became nearly universal, with 97% of males and 96% of females using these devices. Among 15–18-year-olds, the trend



reached its peak, with 99% of males and 100% of females reporting usage. The data highlights a steady increase in device usage with age and no significant differences between males and females, indicating that digital device access is widespread and equitable among both genders.

The data indicates high mobile phone and laptop usage among children in both urban and rural areas, with rural areas showing slightly higher adoption rates. In urban areas, 93% of children reported using these devices, while in rural areas, the percentage was slightly higher at 97%. This small difference suggests that access to digital technology was widespread and not limited by geographical location, reflecting the growing penetration of digital devices even in rural settings.



All the 24 out of school children interviewed in the survey cited that they use mobiles/laptops.

4.2.2 Accessibility of Mobiles/Laptops

Further the children were asked about the devices they use to access internet. The data highlights how accessibility to mobile phones and laptops among children evolves with age. Across all age groups, **parent/guardian's mobile phones** were the most commonly used devices, though usage decreases from 96% among 8–11-year-olds to 71% among 15–18-year-olds as older children used personal

devices. **Personal mobile phone ownership rose significantly** with age, from just 2% in the youngest group to 23% among 15–18-year-olds, reflecting increased independence during adolescence.

Access to laptops remained minimal across all age groups, whether personal or shared. By 15–18 years, only 1% of children had their own laptops. Other sources, such as grandparents' or relatives' devices, accounted for a small fraction of access, further underscoring the dominance of parental devices and, increasingly, personal device ownership among older children.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Children Based on Accessibility of Mobile Phones/Laptops (%)

Caregiver	8 to 11 year old children (N=265)	12 to 14 year old children (N=302)	15 to 18 year old children (N=311)
Personal mobile phone	1.5%	7.0%	22.5%
Personal laptop	0	0	1.3%
Parent/ guardian's mobile phone	95.8%	90.1%	70.7%
Parent/ guardian's laptop	0.8%	3.3%	1%
Grandparent's mobile phone	3%	2.0%	0.6%
Grandparent's laptop	0	0	0%
Relative's mobile phone	2.6%	1.3%	2.6%
Relative's laptop	0	0	0.3%
Sibling's mobile phone	1.1%	3.3%	6.8%
Sibling's laptop	0	0.3%	0.6%
Friend or other, known person's mobile phone or laptop	0	0	0
Cyber cafe	0	0	0
School computers	0	0.7%	0

Parents were asked about what after-school activities or extra-curricular activities their child was involved in. More than half of the parents said that their children played/spent time with friends (58%) and read books (56%). About 30% of the parents mentioned that their ward played mobile games or surfed internet for school and leisure purposes after school.

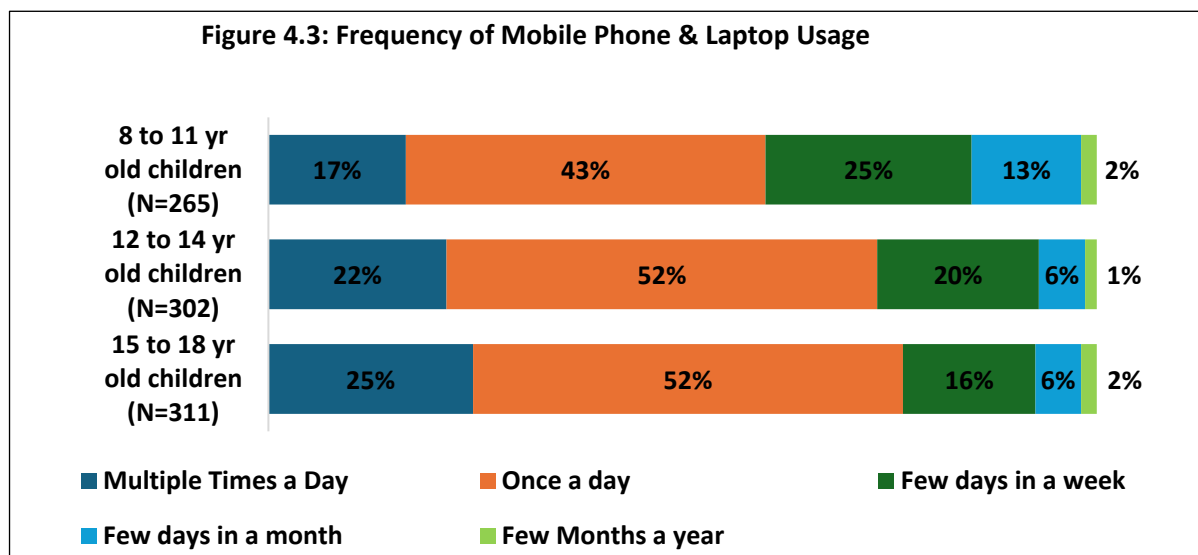
4.2.3 Frequency of Mobile Phone & Laptop Usage

The data shows that mobile phone usage frequency increased significantly with age, with older children engaging with these devices more regularly. Among 15–18-year-olds, 25% used mobile phones multiple times a day, and 52% used them once a day, indicating that nearly 80% of adolescents in this age group had daily interactions with mobile phones.

“In the past, children primarily focused on playing games, but nowadays, they often spend time watching reels and feel compelled to create their own.”

– FGD with community representatives

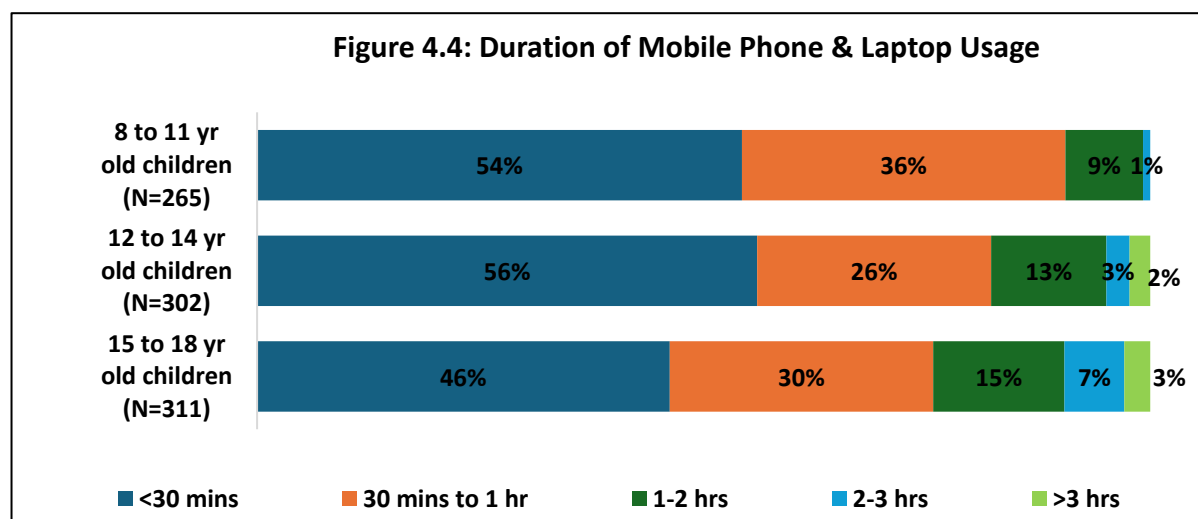
For 12–14-year-olds, the pattern was similar, though slightly less frequent, with 22% using mobile phones multiple times a day and 52% using them once a day. Younger children aged 8–11 demonstrated less frequent usage, with only 17% using mobile phones multiple times a day and 43% using them once daily. This data highlights a clear trend of increasing mobile phone usage as children grow older.



Across all age groups, a significantly higher proportion of male children reported higher frequency (multiple times a day) of phone/laptop usage compared to girl children. In the two lower age groups, more number of children from urban areas used mobile phones/laptops multiple times a day compared to rural children, while in the 15-18 year age group, this trend was reversed.

4.2.4 Duration of Mobile Phone & Laptop Usage

The data revealed a clear trend in the duration of mobile phone usage increasing with age. While majority of the children in all age groups used phones less than 30 minutes a day, the proportion of those who used it over an hour steadily increased with age. For the youngest group, 8–11-year-olds, very few (10%) used phones exceeding one hour. Notably, no children in this group report using their phones for more than 3 hours.

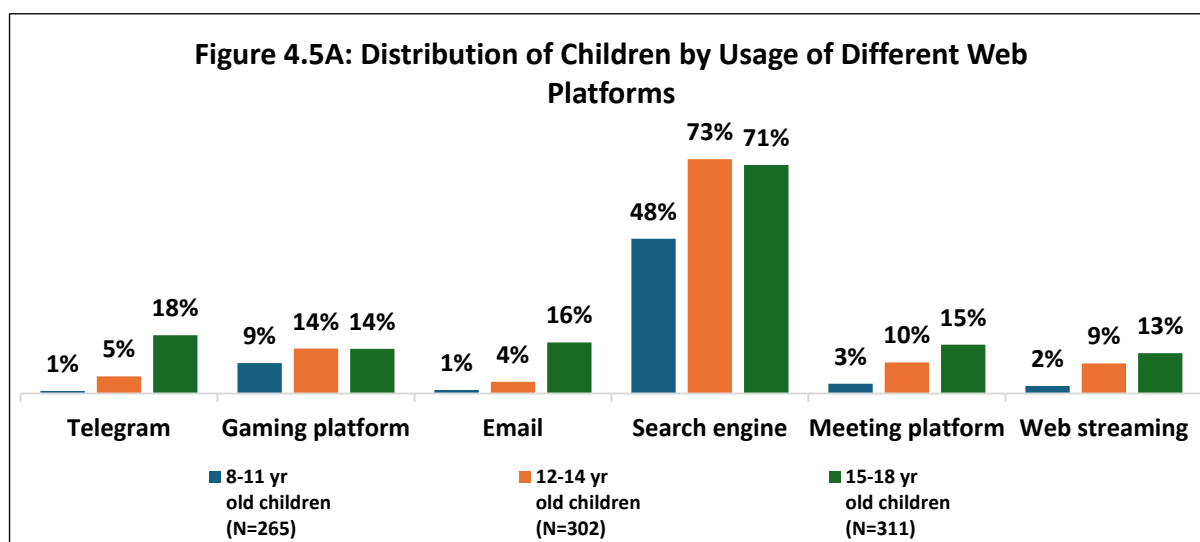


In the 12–14 age group, 18% of them used their phones for over an hour, while among the 15–18-year-olds, a significant 25% used them for over an hour daily.

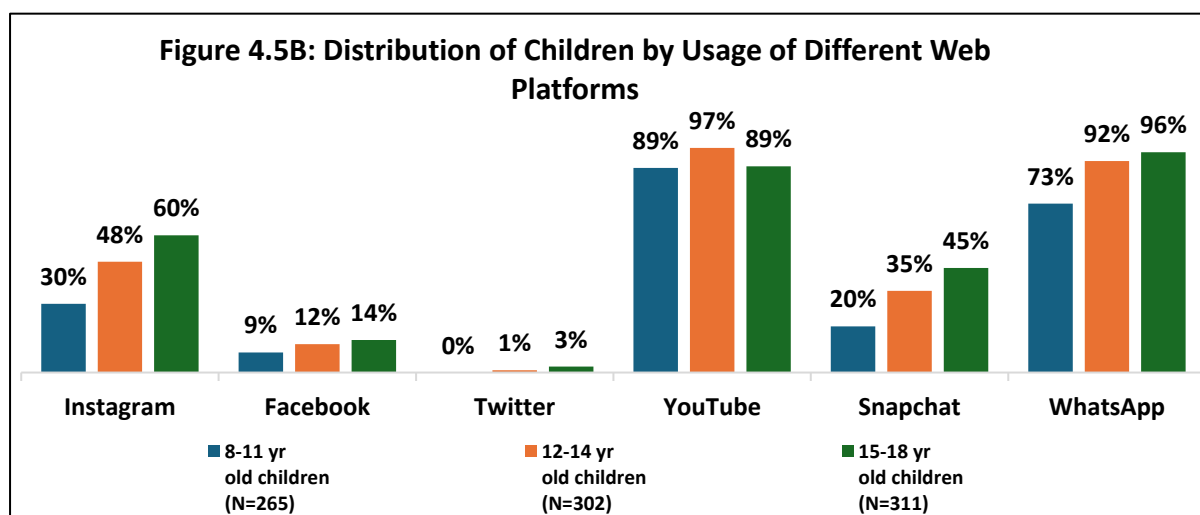
This progression highlights that while most children spend less than 30 minutes on mobile phones, the time spent on these devices steadily increases with age. The oldest age group reported that they used mobile phone and laptop primarily for school & extracurricular activities (46%), 17% used it for leisure, whereas 36% used it for both.

4.2.5 Usage of Different Web Platforms by Children

The data reveals that older children were more frequent users of websites and apps compared to younger ones. Among **8–11-year-olds**, YouTube was the most popular platform, accessed by 90% of children, followed by WhatsApp (73%) and search engines (48%). However, less than 5% of children in this age group used platforms like Twitter, Telegram, email, meeting platforms, or web streaming services.



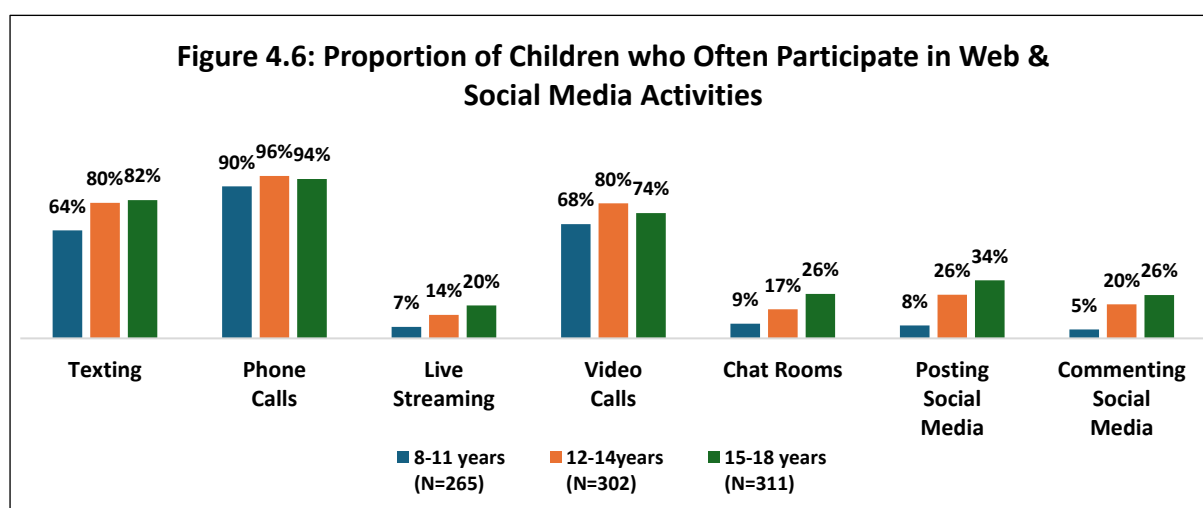
For **12–14-year-olds**, YouTube (97%) and WhatsApp (92%) remained the most widely used platforms, followed by search engines (73%). The least popular platforms among this group were similar to those of the younger children.



Among the oldest age group, **15–18-year-olds**, usage trends remained consistent with some variations. WhatsApp led with 96% usage, followed by YouTube (89%), search engines (71%), and Instagram (60%). Platforms like Twitter and web streaming services continued to be the least used among this age group. **It is to be noted that usage of gaming platforms with live chatting also increased steadily with age.** This data highlights an increase in website and app usage with age, with older children engaging more frequently.

4.2.6 Children's Participation in Web & Social Media Activities

The data highlights distinct patterns in mobile phone activities among children, with usage diversifying and increasing in frequency as they grew older. Phone calls remained the most common activity across all age groups, with high (>90%) and consistent usage. Similarly, video calls were popular, particularly among older and middle age groups, with around 75% of them using it often for communication.



Texting saw a steady rise with age, increasing from 64% among 8–11-year-olds to 82% for 15–18-year-olds. Social media activities, including posting and commenting, showed the most pronounced growth. While only 8% of younger children posted on social media, around 26% of 12–14-year-olds and 34% of 15–18-year-olds engaged in the same. Similarly, commenting activity grew from 5% among younger children to 26% in older adolescents.

These trends underline how older children engaged more actively and broadly with mobile technology, shifting from basic communication to more interactive and public activities like social media and live streaming.

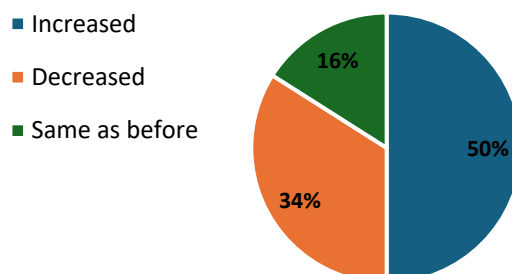
4.2.7 Change in Internet Usage by Children after Covid-19 Pandemic

Older children were asked whether their device usage changed after the Covid-19 pandemic. Approximately half of them reported an **increase** in usage, while one-third noted a **decrease**. The remaining 16% observed **no change** in their usage patterns. Further bivariate analysis showed that

more male children and urban children were of the opinion that the internet usage had increased after the Covid 19 pandemic.

Among those who experienced a change, the reasons behind increased usage were explored. Around three-quarters attributed the rise to the habit of spending leisure time on social media, which persisted after the pandemic, while 50% cited the continuation of online classes as a contributing factor. Main reasons for decrease in usage were increase in time spent studying (60%) and decrease in the number of online classes (40%).

Figure 4.7: Change in Internet Usage by Children after Covid-19 Pandemic



A study conducted to understand child safeguarding practitioners' needs for training on OCEAC and online grooming in India found that 71% of the practitioners believed that there had been an increase in OCSAE since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and shared that they thought this was due to more easily accessible as now that they are not in structured education and children having access to devices, which were restricted before COVID 19⁷.

Table 4.7: Reasons for Change in Internet Usage by Children After Covid-19 Pandemic (%)

Reasons for		15-18
Increase	Habit of spending leisure time on social media continued after pandemic	72%
	Increased number of online classes	49%
	To stay connected with peers and relatives	27%
	Gives anonymity to connect with new people	8%
	Time spent studying has reduced	7%
Decrease	Time spent studying has increased	60%
	Online classes are little to non-existent after lockdown was lifted	40%
	Physical interaction with peers increased after pandemic	12%

4.2.8 Monitoring/Supervision of Screen Time by Primary Caregiver

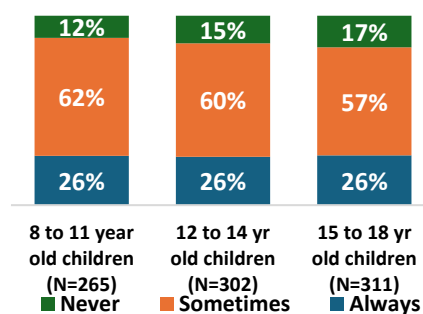
There is evidence that the greater degree of parental monitoring the fewer negative online experiences had by their children. Children whose parents were well aware of their online activities were less likely to be

⁷ Themelidis et.al (2022). Practitioner Views about Online Harms in India. Retrieved from Swansea university website. [<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Practitioner-Views-about-Online-Harms-in-India.pdf>]

asked to do something sexual in front of a webcam and they responded less to sexual questions and requests online, compared to those whose parents did not monitor their children's activities as much⁸.

The data shows in Figure 4.8 the frequency of screen time monitoring by primary caregivers across three age groups. For all age groups—8 to 11 years, 12 to 14 years, and 15 to 18 years—26% of caregivers always monitored screen time, while a majority monitored it sometimes (~60%). However, the proportion of children whose screen time was never monitored increased slightly with age, from 12% in the youngest group to 17% in the oldest group. This suggests

Figure 4.8: Frequency of Screen Time Monitoring by Primary Caregiver



that caregivers tend to reduce strict monitoring as children grew older. Further bivariate analysis showed that **a greater number of male children in the youngest age group and more female children in the older age group reported frequent monitoring by parents.**

The data revealed interesting insights into parental awareness and monitoring. Frequent monitoring of children was reported by 43% of parents, while 21% engage in rare monitoring.

Bivariate analysis was conducted to assess device usage, frequency of use, accessibility, and parental monitoring among children with both parents engaged in income-generating activities compared to those with only one parent involved. The data showed no significant differences in these indicators between the two groups.

⁸ De Graaf, H., Mijer, S., Poelman, J., & I. Vanwesenbeeck (2005). Sex under the age of 25. Sexual health of youth in the Netherlands in 2005. [\[https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30040304/\]](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30040304/)

5

Nature & Extent of OSEAC Prevalence in Karnataka

5.1 Children Who Reported Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online

5.1.1 Prevalence Rate

Literature on prevalence rates OSEAC revealed that the proportion of children reporting negative online experience rises with age, although there are few or no gender differences in most countries⁹. This also validates the point that a higher proportion of older children used mobile phones compared to younger ones and older ones tend to have personal devices whereas younger children were dependent on parents' devices.

Children in the older age groups were asked if they ever felt unsafe or embarrassed online. Among children aged 12-14 years (N=302), only 2% reported such experiences, whereas the percentage increased to 5% for those aged 15-18 years (N=311). This indicates that older teenagers were more likely to encounter situations online that lead to discomfort or insecurity compared to their younger counterparts.

When analysed for the area of residence, it was found that about **70% of the children who felt uncomfortable/embarrassed online were from urban areas.**

The increase in prevalence may be attributed to greater online exposure, more engagement in social media, ownership of devices like mobile phones and laptops and increased access to various online platforms as children grow older. It was also discussed in the previous sections that parents of older children tend to less frequently monitor their internet usage. This trend **underscores the**

Figure 5.1: Gender wise Prevalence of Children that Reported Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online (%)



“More boys than girls fall prey to online sexual abuse, but many such cases do not come to light”

-DCPU Official

⁹ Smahel et.al 2020. EU Kids Online 2020 Survey Results from 19 countries. [<https://www.eukidsonline.ch/files/Eu-kids-online-2020-international-report.pdf>]

importance of implementing age-appropriate digital safety education and interventions to address the unique challenges faced by different age groups.

As presented in Table 5.1, a significant difference can be seen in experiences of being insulted by strangers, with 23 cases reported in the 15-18 age group compared to just 2 in the younger age group. Similarly, being insulted by known people was more prevalent among older teenagers (6 cases) than younger ones (2 cases). Notably, incidents involving indecent pictures of other people were more common among the 12-14 age group (3 cases) than the 15-18 group (2 cases). Overall, the data highlights that older children faced more frequent and diverse online risks, particularly concerning abuse by strangers.

Children who were forced by strangers to do unsafe or embarrassing things were asked if they actually did them and none reported doing so.

Table 5.1: Prevalence of Children that Reported Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online (%)		
Reasons for Feeling Unsafe or Embarrassed Online	Count of 12 -14 year old children (N=302)	Count of 15-18 year old children (N=311)
Insulted by known people	2	6
Insulted by strangers	2	23
Shown indecent pictures of other people	3	2
Forced to share my personal information, phone number, address	1	1
Forced to share photos & videos of myself	0	2
Forced to do a video call	0	1
Do things with body that made them scared or embarrassed	1	0
Blackmailed/ Threatened	1	0
Forced to do something bad to other children	1	0

5.1.2 Common Platforms Where Children Felt Unsafe or Uncomfortable

The data in Table 5.2 reveals the platforms where children reported feeling unsafe or uncomfortable online, highlighting key differences between age groups. Instagram stands out as the most significant platform for both groups, with 6 reports from 12-14-year-olds and a higher 13 reports from 15-18-year-olds, indicating that older teenagers experienced more discomfort on social media. Gaming platforms reflected equal levels of discomfort across both age groups, suggesting that gaming environments present consistent challenges regardless of age.

Table 5.2: Platforms where children felt unsafe or uncomfortable		
Platforms	No. of 12–14-year-olds felt unsafe	No. of 15–18-year-olds felt unsafe
Instagram	6	13
Facebook	1	0
Gaming platforms	1	1
YouTube	0	2
WhatsApp	0	1

5.1.3 Perpetrators' Relationship with Children

The data in Figure 5.2 illustrates the relationship between children and the perpetrators of online incidents that left them feeling unsafe or embarrassed. Among the 15-18 age group (N=17), 53% reported that the perpetrator was an unknown person, while 35% indicated the involvement of a known person, and 12% experienced incidents involving both. For the younger

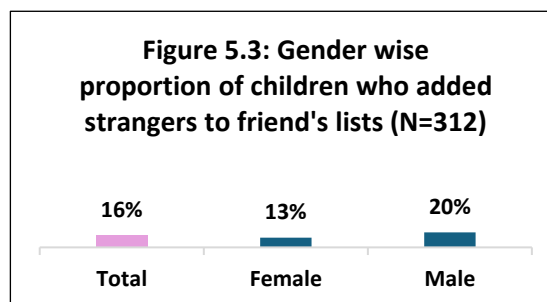
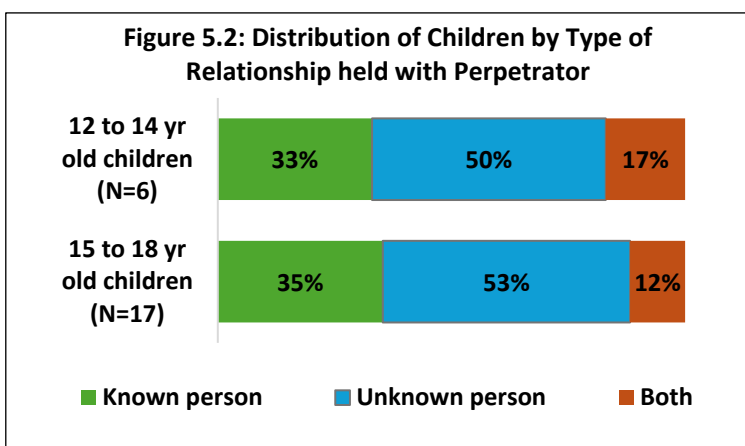
group aged 12-14 (N=6), the trend was similar, with 50% of incidents involving unknown individuals, 33% involving known people, and a slightly higher 17% involving both. The data highlights that in both age groups, the majority of unsafe experiences stemmed from interactions with strangers, underscoring the potential risks posed by un-moderated online spaces. However, the involvement of known individuals, particularly in the 15-18 age group, points to the importance of addressing online interactions within social circles as well. This highlights one of the important aspects for awareness creation and planning preventive strategies among students at school level.

A study was conducted in Sweden where the first 30 children identified in sexually abusive images seized by the police were examined. The study revealed that most of the children had a relation with the perpetrator, for example they were a family member, relative, friend of the family etc. Out of the 30 children only in 3 cases (9%) the perpetrator was someone who from the beginning was more-or-less unknown to the child or the child's family¹⁰.

5.2 Prevalence of Children Engaging with Strangers

5.2.1 Children Who Befriended Online Strangers

Children aged 15-18 years were enquired if they added strangers to their friend's list. About 16% of them said they had befriended online strangers in the past year. Gender wise bivariate analysis showed that a significantly higher proportion of male children befriended online strangers than females. When analysed for area of residence, there was no significant difference between children from urban and rural areas.

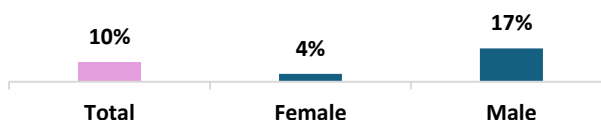


¹⁰Ainsaar and Loof 2002. Online behaviour related to child sexual abuse. Retrieved from the CBSS website. [\[https://childrenatrisk.cbss.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/10/2020/12/Online_behaviour_related_to_sexual_abuse.pdf\]](https://childrenatrisk.cbss.org/wpcontent/uploads/sites/10/2020/12/Online_behaviour_related_to_sexual_abuse.pdf)

5.2.2 Children Who Met Online Strangers in Person

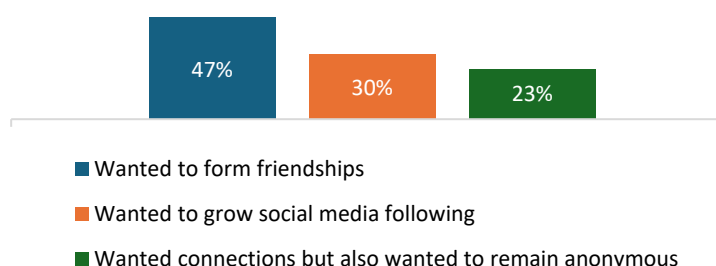
Successively, the children were asked if they ever met online strangers in person. The data indicates that 10% of children reported meeting online strangers in person. When analyzed by gender, 17% of males engaged in this behavior compared to just 4% of females. This indicates that boys were more likely than girls to add unknown individuals to their online connections and meeting them personally. It was found that more children from rural areas (12%) compared to urban areas (9%) met these strangers in person.

Figure 5.4: Gender wise proportion of children who met online Strangers in Person (N=312)



Children who had engaged with strangers by befriending them online and also meeting in person, were asked about the reasons why they did not feel inhibited to do so. The most common reasons were the desire to form more friendships (47%) and to grow their social media following (30%). Forming friendships while remaining anonymous accounted for 23% of responses.

Figure 5.5: Reasons Behind 15-18 Year Old Children Engaging with Strangers Online (N=60)



Evidence from a similar survey conducted in Europe revealed that between one in four and one in two children have communicated online with someone they not met face-to-face before, but fewer – generally around one in six – have met such a person offline. More older children and boys interact with unknown people than younger children or girls, although few gender differences were found for face-to-face meetings¹¹.

This highlights that social validation and expanding their online presence were key drivers for teenagers, reflecting the influence of digital culture and the importance of social media in their lives. The desire for anonymity alongside connection suggests a complex dynamic where teens sought interaction but also value privacy. **The data also reflects on the risk-taking behaviour of teenagers as part of their mental maturity of that age which does not distinguish between causal effects. Of the**

¹¹ Smahel et.al 2020. EU Kids Online 2020 Survey Results from 19 countries. [<https://www.eukidsonline.ch/files/Eu-kids-online-2020-international-report.pdf>]

children who met online strangers online, 81% mentioned that they had a pleasant experience, 3% had an unpleasant experience, 16% were placed in immediate harm.

5.2.3 Children who Shared Personal Information with Strangers Online

The figure 5.6 showed that 7% of children, on average, reported sharing personal information with strangers online. When broken down by gender, 8% of males engaged in this behavior compared to 6% of females. Although the difference was relatively small, it suggests that boys were slightly more likely to disclose personal details to strangers than girls. Similarly, there was no urban-rural difference in the findings.

Figure 5.6: Gender wise proportion of children who shared personal info with strangers online (N=312)

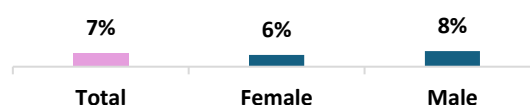


Table 5.3: Types of Personal Information Shared with Strangers Online (%)

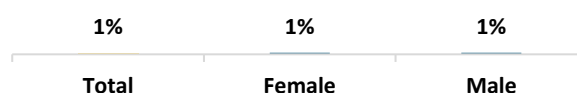
Personal information	No. of Children who reported (N=20)
Full Name	17
Phone Number	11
Personal Photos	8
Address	6
Personal Videos	2

Table 5.3 highlights the types of personal information shared by children with strangers online, with data from 20 respondents. The most commonly shared detail were full names, reported by 17 children (85%). Phone numbers followed, with 11 children (55%) disclosing this information. Personal photos were shared by 8 children (40%), while addresses were provided by 6 children (30%). The least common but still concerning was the sharing of personal videos, reported by 2 children (10%).

5.2.4 Children Who Shared Intimate Photos/ Videos with Strangers Online

Figure 5.7 shows that 1% of children, regardless of gender, reported sharing intimate images or videos with strangers online. The data revealed no significant difference between males and females, with both groups reflecting the same 1% engagement in this behavior.

Figure 5.7: Gender wise proportion of children who shared intimate images/videos with strangers online (N=312)



While the overall percentage was low, the implications were serious, as sharing intimate content can lead to risks such as exploitation, blackmail, and long-term psychological effects. The fact that this behavior was present across genders highlights the need for comprehensive digital safety education for all children, emphasizing the importance of maintaining personal boundaries and understanding the potential consequences of sharing intimate material.

5.2.5 Awareness of OSEAC Incidents Among Peer Groups

Of the 312 children in the age group of 15-18 years old, 16 (5%) mentioned that they were aware of OSEAC cases among their peer groups. The most commonly recognized incidents include sending naked photos (8 out of 16) and meeting strangers in person (6 out of 16). These activities highlight significant risks associated with online interactions, particularly involving the sharing of explicit material and physical meetings with unknown individuals, both of which are known to be common elements in sexual exploitation cases.

Table 5.4: Types of Incidents that 15-18 Year Old Children were Aware of Other Children Having Gone Through (N=16)

Types of Incidents	Count
Sending Naked Photos	8
Meeting a stranger in person	6
Sending naked videos	4
Undressing in video chat	1
Do things with their body that made them uncomfortable	2
Taking indecent images of other children	2

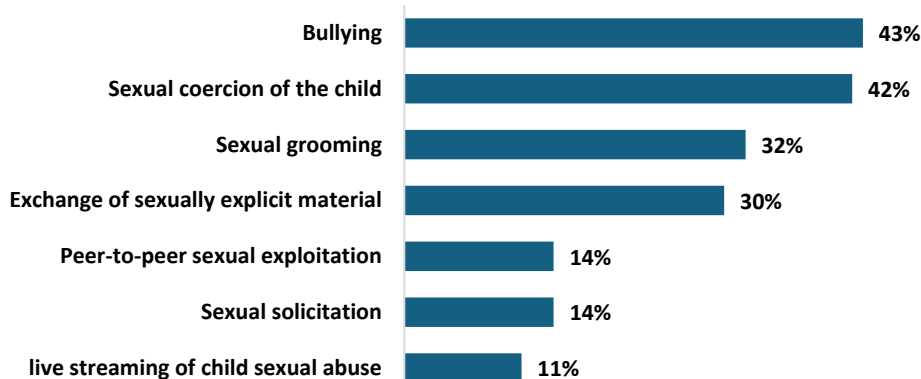
5.3 Prevalence of OSEAC According to Parents

About 14% of the parents reported that their child had been a victim of OSEAC and these parents were further enquired the type of incidents and the data is presented in Figure 5.8 **Parents who reported their child being a victim were mostly from urban (66%) areas and most of these children were aged 12-14 years (46%).**

Sexual coercion (42%) and bullying (43%) emerged as the most prevalent incidents, indicating a widespread issue with online harassment and manipulation. Sexual grooming (32%) and the exchange of sexually explicit material (30%) were also common, pointing to the severe and exploitative nature of many cases. Additionally, 14% of parents reported incidents of sexual solicitation and peer-to-peer sexual exploitation, further emphasizing the diverse ways in which children are targeted online.

The discrepancy between self-reported cases by children (5%) and parental reports (14%) can be attributed to the sensitive nature of OSEAC, as many children felt uncomfortable or fearful about disclosing their experiences to a research interviewer, possibly due to shame, stigma, or distrust.

Figure 5.8: Prevalence of Types of OSEAC as Reported by Parents (N= 44)



The data regarding how parents found out about their child's involvement in Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) highlights the varying levels of awareness and proactive measures taken by parents. The most common way

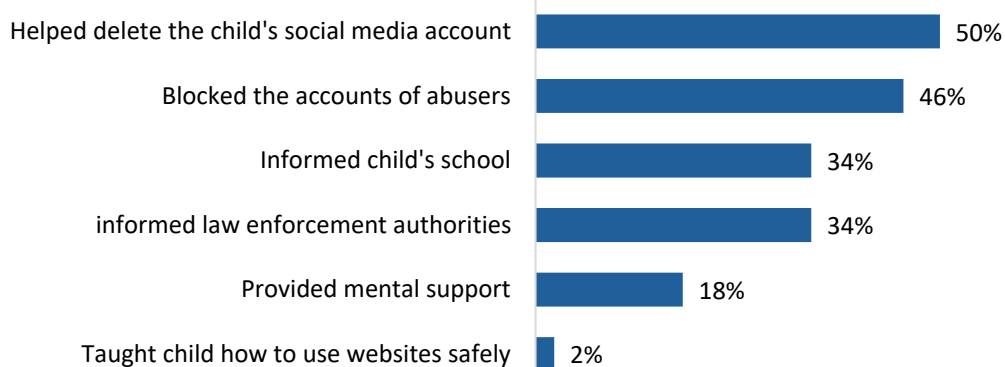
Ways in which parents found out (N=44):

- **Child Informed: 46%**
- **Noticed unusual behaviour: 18%**
- **Monitored social media & internet activity: 27%**
- **Child informed someone & they informed the parent: 9%**

parents discovered the abuse was through the child directly informing them (46%). This suggests that open communication between parents and children is critical, yet it also implies that many children may not report such incidents, either due to fear or lack of awareness.

Monitoring of social media and internet activity accounted for 27% of the cases, indicating that some parents were able to identify issues through active surveillance of their child's online presence. This highlights the importance of parents staying informed about their children's digital lives, although it also points to potential privacy concerns.

Figure 5.9: Steps Taken by Parents (N= 44)





Parents were also asked about what measures they took to prevent such incidents in the future. The most common response, by 50% of parents, was helping their child delete their social media account, which suggests a proactive measure to remove the child from harmful online environments. Blocking the accounts of abusers was another prevalent step, with 46% of parents taking this action to prevent further contact and harm from the perpetrators.

In terms of support, 34% of parents reported informing law enforcement authorities and the child's school, indicating that they took formal steps to address the issue and ensure the safety of their child within both the legal and educational frameworks. Providing mental support was reported by 18% of parents, which highlights the need for psychological care and emotional reassurance for children who may be traumatized by these experiences. However, only 2% of parents taught their child how to use websites safely, which underscores the need for more comprehensive education around online safety.

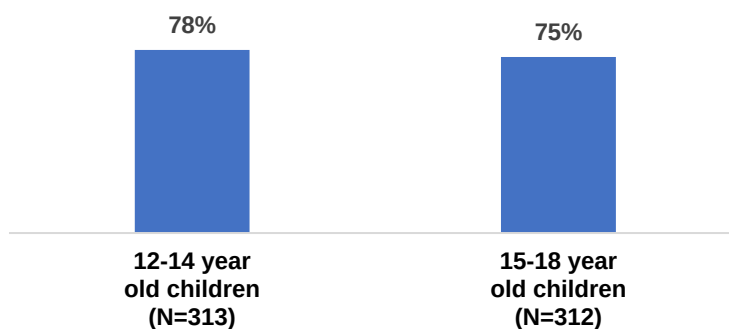
6

Awareness & Perception of Risk Factors in Karnataka

6.1 Perception on the Likelihood of Children to Experience OSEAC

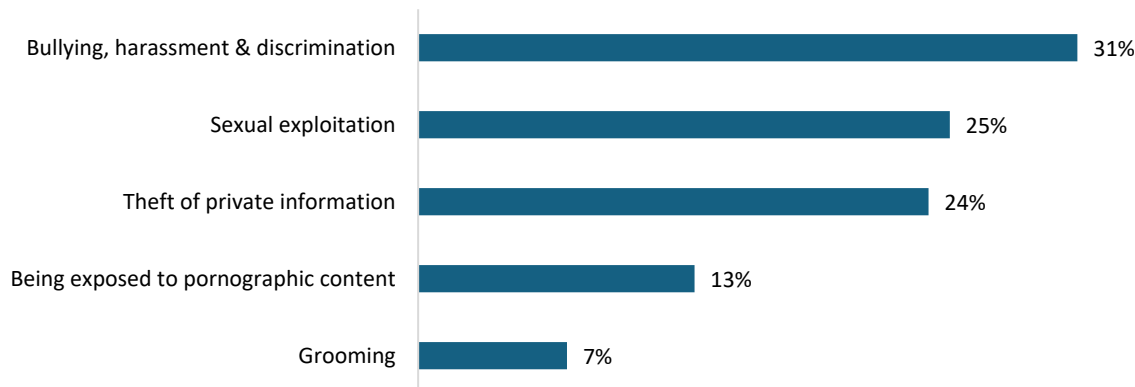
A significant 78% of children aged 12-14 years believed that their peers were likely to experience OSEAC, while 75% of those aged 15-18 years shared the same concern. This high level of perceived risk indicates that children themselves recognized the prevalence of online threats, even if they have not personally experienced them.

Figure 6.1: Proportion of children who mentioned children are likely to Experience OSEAC (%)



The slight difference between the two age groups suggested that younger children felt more vulnerable or less equipped to navigate online spaces safely. This could reflect a gap in digital literacy, confidence, or protective mechanisms for the 12-14 age group compared to older teenagers. The fact that three-quarters of the 15-18 age group also perceived OSEAC as a likely threat highlights the persistent nature of the issue across adolescence. There was no significant gender difference in the data.

Figure 6.2: Awareness of the Biggest Risks to Children Among 12-18 year Olds (N=625)



The data on awareness of the biggest risks to children among 12-18-year-olds revealed a clear understanding of the various threats they face online. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination were perceived as the most significant risks (31%), followed closely by sexual exploitation (25%). This highlights a growing awareness of the psychological and emotional dangers that children encounter in digital spaces, where peer interactions and malicious actors can lead to harmful experiences.

Notably, theft of private information (24%) was seen as nearly as concerning as sexual exploitation, suggesting that children were increasingly aware of the importance of online privacy and the risks associated with sharing personal data.

6.2 Perception of Platforms with the Highest & Lowest Risk for OSEAC

When enquired about which online platforms made them feel most/least unsafe from online sexual exploitation and child abuse, **most children preferred private messaging apps such as Whatsapp/Telegram as the safest platform while online social media applications such as Instagram/Facebook were termed as the “least safe” platform.**

This can be attributed to **children identifying “unknown strangers” as the primary perpetrator of OSEAC**, and platforms like Instagram/Facebook allowing strangers to interact with posts at a larger rate compared to private messaging apps such as Whatsapp/Telegram enable broader and often unsolicited interactions. Features such as public posts, comments, and direct messages from strangers amplify the risk of exposure to unknown perpetrators

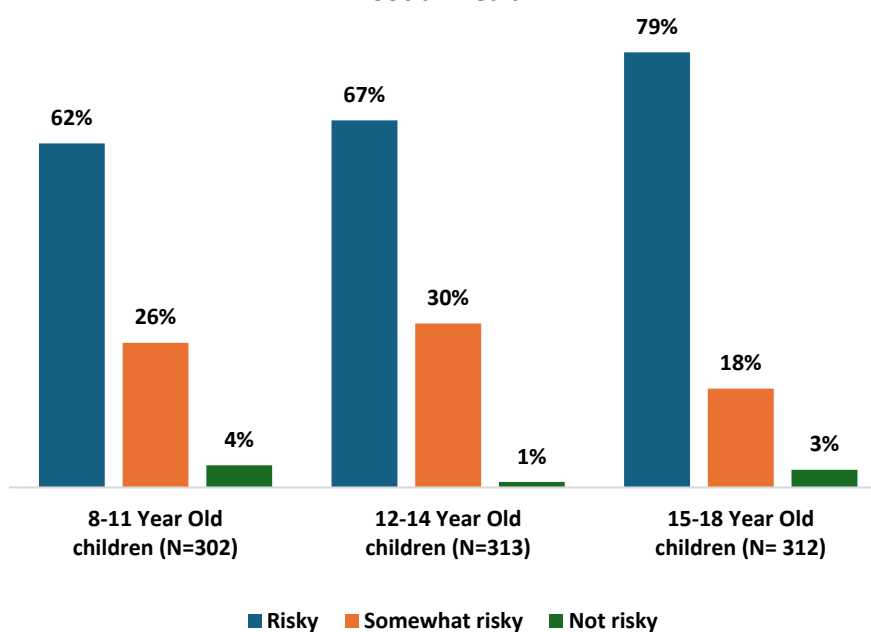
Most Safe Platform	•12-14 years: Messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram etc. •15-18 years: Messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram etc.
Least Safe Platforms	•12-14 years: Social Media like Instagram, Facebook etc. •15-18 years: Social Media like Instagram, Facebook etc.
Likely Perpetrators of OSEAC	•12-14 years: Unknown Adults •15-18 years: Unknown Adults

6.3 Perception of Risk Involved in Engaging with Strangers Online

As highlighted in Figure 6.3 most children were aware of the risks associated with engaging with strangers online with the awareness level gradually increasing as the child grew older (79% 15-18 year olds).

It indicates that as the child has increased interactions online, they were able to correctly gauge the potential vulnerabilities posed by strangers and were able to take a more cautious approach towards the same. Additionally, future intervention may be targeted towards creating awareness campaigns that are tailored towards younger aged children regarding the importance of online safety and reduce their ambivalence about the same.

Figure 6.3: Perception of Risk of Talking to Strangers on Social Media



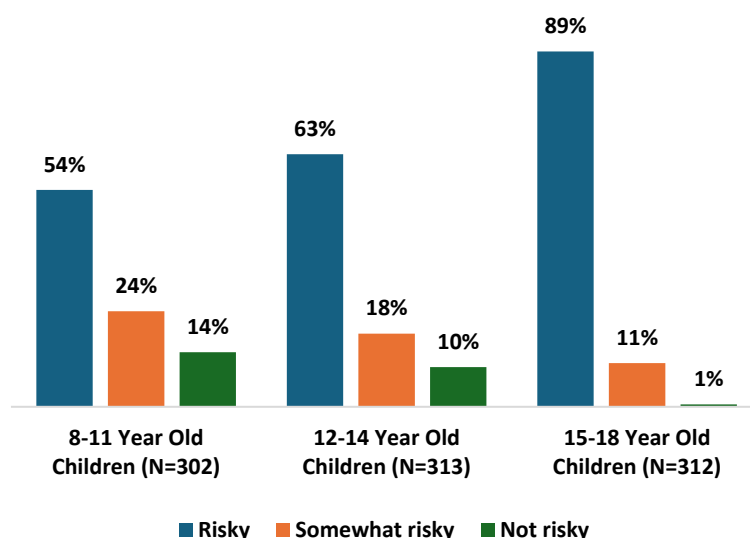
Further, female children (87%) had a greater level of awareness about the risks of talking to strangers on social media as they correctly gauged it as “very risky” compared to male children (69%). This disparity could stem from a variety of factors such as societal influences, personal experiences or most cautionary messaging being targeted towards safety of women and girls in public spaces (both online and offline); which highlights the need for gender sensitive campaigns around safe digital practices. At a regional level, bivariate analysis showed that 79% children from urban and 78% from rural areas reported levels of awareness about such risks; which could be a result of widespread internet penetration in rural areas as part of government efforts.

6.4 Perception of Risk of Sharing Intimate Information with Strangers Online

In addition to talking with strangers on the internet, most children (54% for 8–11-year-olds, 63% for 12-14 year olds, and 89% for 15-18 year olds) were also generally aware about the risks associated with sharing personal information such as private pictures, videos etc. with strangers over the internet.

In addition to the awareness level increasing with age, the proportions of children who believed it was only “somewhat risky” to do so gradually decreased as they grew older suggests that while children do end up becoming more digitally conscious as they age, there is also a need for programs informing younger aged children about the dangers of online predators along with strict parental supervision on internet activity as their lack of knowledge might leave them vulnerable towards online exploitation and abuse.

Figure 6.4: Perception of Risk of Sharing Intimate Information over the Internet



Additionally, female children across all age categories also reported a slightly higher level of awareness about the risk factor associated with sharing intimate information online compared to male children; suggesting that current awareness regarding the importance of online safety is mostly geared towards female children. Therefore, gender sensitive campaigns could aid in spreading awareness about the same amongst boys and girls as they might be using different social media platforms/messaging apps.

6.5 Perception of Risk of Having Access to Pornography

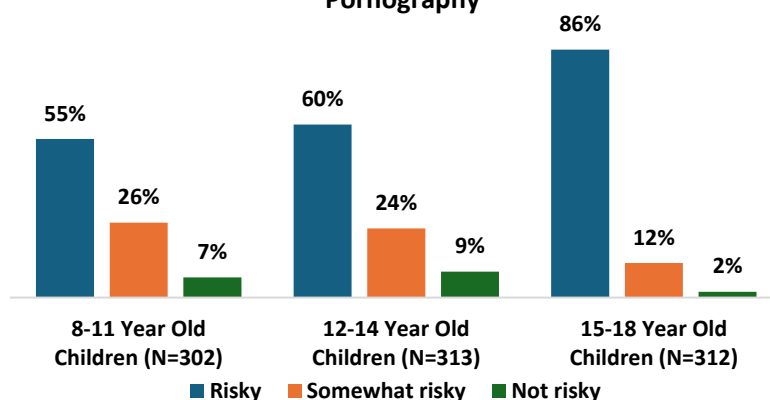
Evidence from a similar study conducted in Europe revealed that the percentage of 9- to 16-year-olds who reported seeing some kind of sexual image in the past year ranged from 21% to 50%. Again, more boys and older children saw these images¹².

As highlighted in Figure 6.5, children across age categories were able to correctly identify the harm factor associated with having access to pornography on the internet with 55% of 8-11 year olds, 60% of 12-14 year olds and 86% of 15-18 year olds stating it as “risky”

¹² Smahel et.al 2020. EU Kids Online 2020 Survey Results from 19 countries. [<https://www.eukidsonline.ch/files/Eu-kids-online-2020-international-report.pdf>]

However, the declining ratio of children who term it as “not risky” as they grew older suggests a potential area for intervention which may include age-sensitive education regarding the various facets of online pornography that can be upgraded as the child grows older to conversations about consent, mental health and matters related to human sexuality.

Figure 6.5: Perception of Risk of Having Access to Pornography

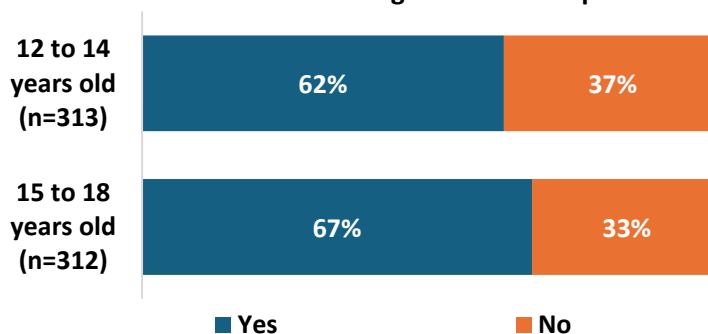


Similar to the previous sections, female children were able to correctly identify the risk factor in having unregulated access to pornography across all age groups (58% vs 52% for 8–11-year-olds, 64% vs 55% for 12–14-year-olds and 54% vs 46% for 15–18-year-olds) suggesting a disparity in the knowledge level among male and female children and a potential target area for intervention. Additionally, at a regional level, while 8–14-year-old children from rural areas had a higher level of comprehension compared to urban areas regarding the dangers of being exposed to online pornography at a young age; on the other hand urban children between 15-18 years of age displayed a higher level of awareness compared to their rural counterparts.

6.6 Sources of Awareness about Risk for Children

Most children between the ages of 12-18 years old reported that they had been informed about the importance of online safety by parents/ guardians, teachers etc. with 62% of children between the ages of 12-14 years and 67% of children between the ages of

Figure 6.6: Percentage of Children that Had Been Told About the Dangers of Online Spaces



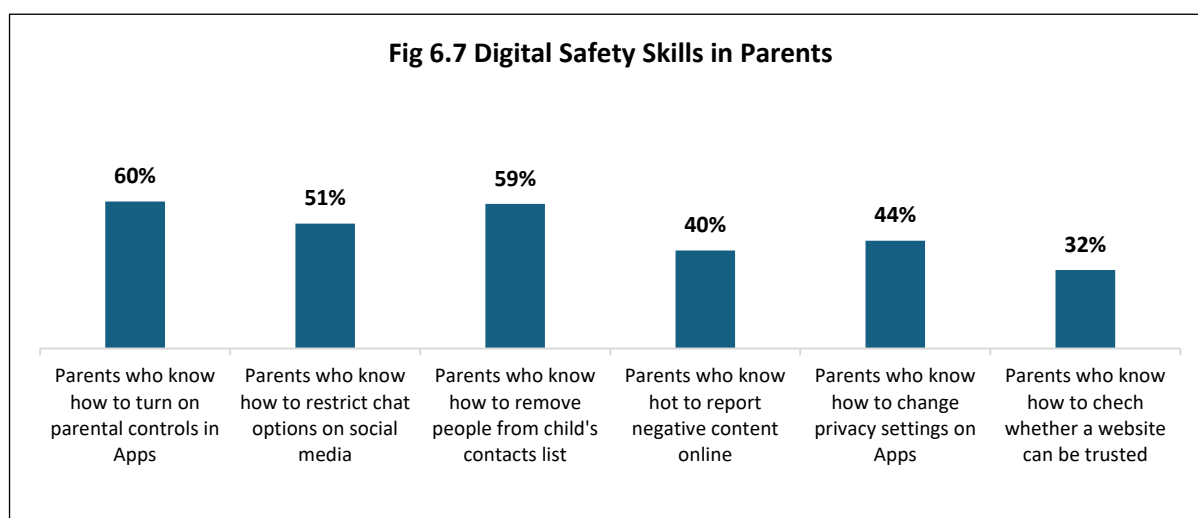
15-18 years stating the same. This was evident from the high level of awareness among children regarding important facets of online safety such as access to pornography, interactions and sharing of intimate information with strangers on the internet. It highlighted the positive impact of such awareness generating programs/discussions as children can verbalize if they have been made to feel unsafe on the internet, and continued efforts to provide age-appropriate guidance can help foster a safer and more informed approach to navigating digital environments.

6.7 Digital Safety Skills in Parents

The analysis of the interview data with parents revealed varying levels of digital literacy regarding online safety measures for children. **A majority of parents (60%) knew how to enable parental controls in apps, suggesting a relatively high awareness of general safety settings.** Similarly, about 59% were familiar with removing people from their child's contact list.

However, only half of the parents (51%) knew how to restrict chat options on social media, which is crucial for preventing unwanted communication. Even lower proportions were observed in areas directly related to online threats i.e., only 40% knew how to report negative content, and 44% understood how to change privacy settings on apps, highlighting potential gaps in their ability to mitigate risks.

The most concerning finding was that only one-third of the parents knew how to check whether a website could be trusted, pointing to a significant vulnerability in assessing online threats. This lack of awareness could expose children to harmful content, scams, or misinformation. Overall, the data suggested that while parents were somewhat knowledgeable about basic controls, there was a need for further education and awareness on more advanced digital safety measures.



Parental control tools and awareness programs play a crucial role in mitigating children's online vulnerabilities. Effective use of parental controls, such as restricting chat options, managing contact lists, and enabling privacy settings, can significantly reduce exposure to online risks. However, as the data indicated gaps in parental knowledge, awareness programs become essential in equipping parents with the necessary skills to navigate digital safety effectively. Workshops, online resources, and school-based initiatives can help parents learn how to identify trustworthy websites, report harmful content, and enhance cybersecurity measures. Strengthening parental digital literacy ensures a safer online environment for children, minimizing their risk of online exploitation and abuse.

7

Effective Prevention & Intervention Strategies

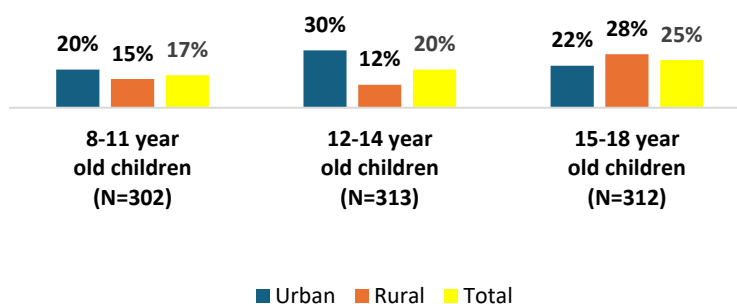
Effective prevention and intervention strategies are critical in addressing the growing concern of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC). The digital world offers numerous benefits, but it also exposes children to significant risks, as shown by the alarming rates of online harassment, grooming, and exploitation. The importance of these strategies lies in their ability to protect vulnerable children, provide timely support, and deter potential offenders.

Prevention strategies are vital to equip children, parents, and educators with the necessary tools to recognize and avoid online dangers.

7.1 Awareness Programs on Digital Safety

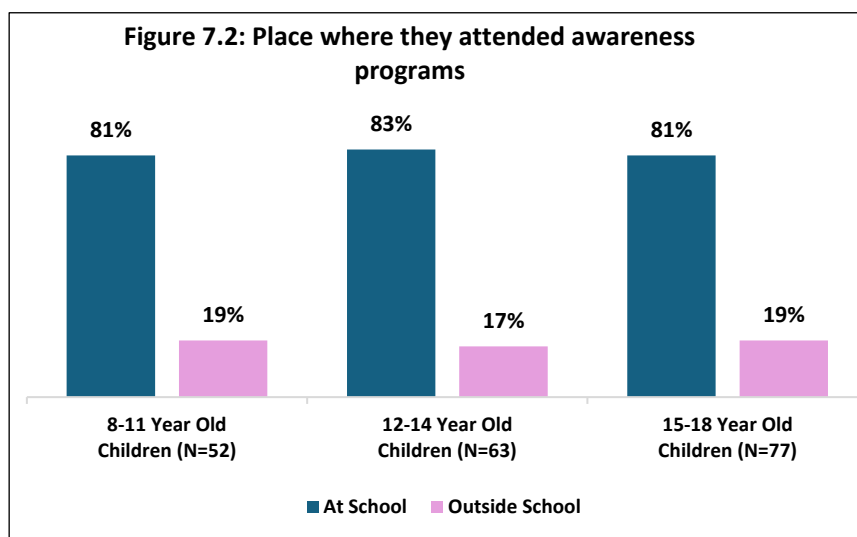
Children were asked if they attended any awareness programs on digital safety. Among children aged 8-11, participation was slightly higher in urban areas (20%) compared to rural areas (15%), resulting in an overall participation rate of 17%. This gap suggests that younger children in rural areas may have fewer opportunities to engage with digital safety initiatives, potentially increasing their vulnerability to online threats.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of Children who attended awareness Programs on digital Safety (%)



The divide became more pronounced in the 12-14 age group, where 30% of urban children attended awareness programs, while only 12% of their rural counterparts did. Notably, the 15-18 age group showed a reversal of this trend, with rural children participating in digital safety programs at a higher rate (28%) than those in urban areas (22%). The total participation rate of 25% indicated a broader reach of awareness initiatives for older children, yet the disparity between age groups suggests that efforts may not consistently target younger populations, where early intervention could be most effective. **Further bivariate analysis with regards to the school going status of children revealed that only 4 out of 24 out of school children had attended such awareness programs.**

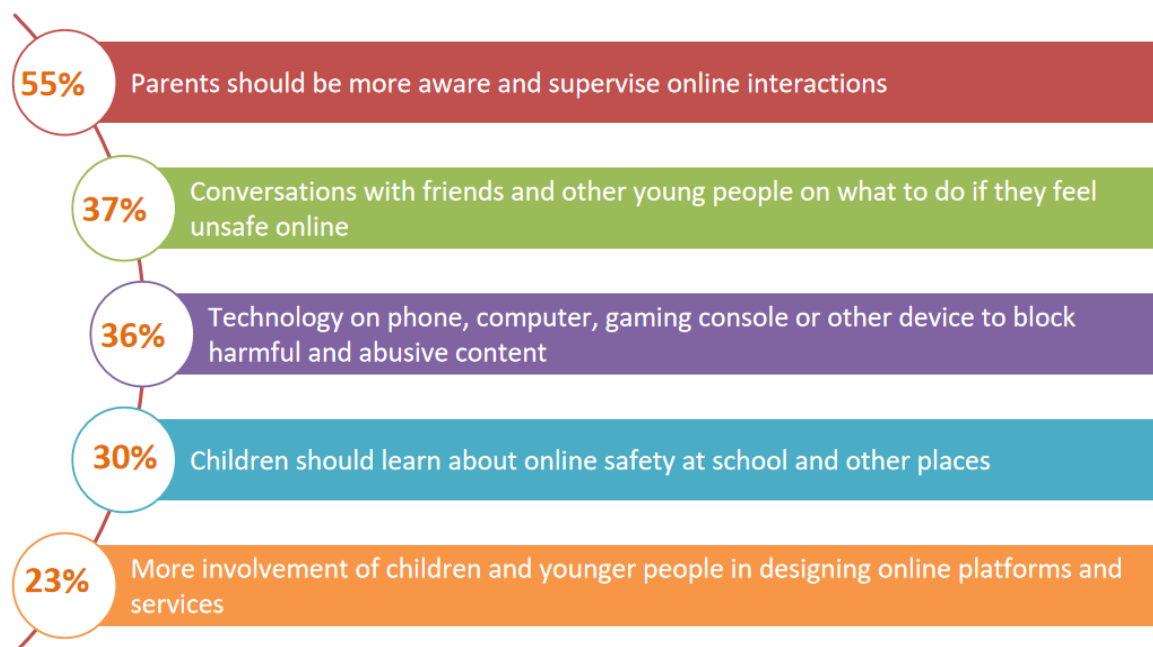
The data on where children attended digital safety awareness programs highlights the critical role that schools play in delivering online safety education. Across all age groups, the majority of children—81% of 8–11-year-olds, 83% of 12–14 year olds, and 81% of 15–18 year olds—reported attending these programs at



school. This consistency underscores the importance of integrating digital safety awareness into the formal education system, ensuring widespread reach and accessibility.

7.2 Steps to Make Internet Surfing Safer

Children were asked to cite some ways in which internet surfing can be made safer for them. A wide range of responses were received, and the prominent ones are depicted in the figure below.



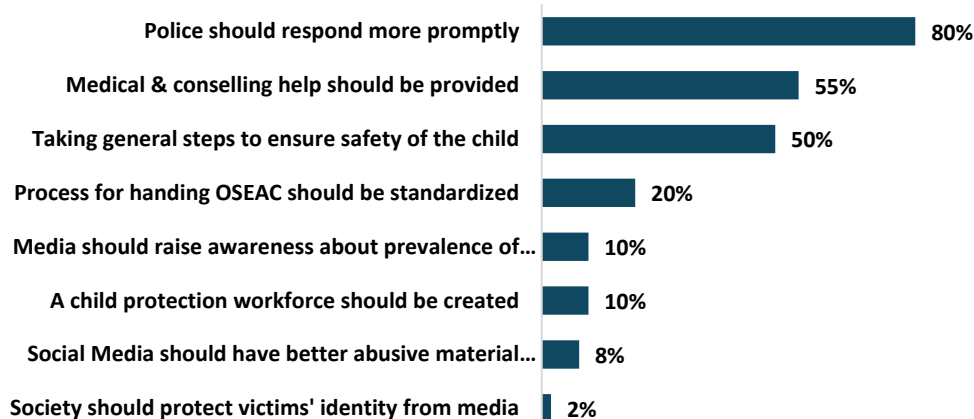
The responses from children reflected a well-rounded understanding of online safety, emphasizing the shared responsibility of parents, schools, and technology providers. The fact that over half of the

children cited parental supervision as key highlights the critical role of caregivers in guiding safe online behaviour. However, the significant focus on peer communication (37%) suggests that children also valued the support from their social circles. The call for stronger technological solutions (36%) signals that children recognized the limitations of personal vigilance and saw value in automated content filtering. Notably, children's involvement in platform design (23%) reflects a forward-thinking approach, acknowledging that platforms can be made safer by incorporating the perspectives of young users.

7.3 Support Services in District (By Parents)

Parents with children in the age group of 8-18 years were asked for their opinion on ways to improve support for victims in the district. The most prominent concern, with **80% of parents** highlighting it, was the need for **faster police response**, reflecting a widespread belief that delays in law enforcement handling may exacerbate harm or hinder justice. Similarly, **55% stressed the importance of medical and counselling support**, underscoring the recognition of long-term psychological and physical impacts on victims.

Figure 7.3: Ways in Which Support Can be Improved In the District (N=304)



General child safety measures were advocated by **50% of parents**, indicating that proactive prevention was seen as equally critical as reactive solutions. A **standardized process for handling OSEAC cases** (20%) pointed to the need for clearer guidelines and consistent responses across districts. Overall, the data highlights a strong parental demand for a responsive, well-coordinated system that prioritizes swift action, victim care, and comprehensive child safety measures.



Insights from Qualitative Discussions

Interviews were held with teachers, district child protection unit officials, district officials of departments like Police, Juvenile Police, Juvenile Justice Board, Cyber Crime and Child Welfare Committee, state level officials, and NGOs/Academicians as part of qualitative data collection under the study. Additionally, FGDs were conducted with community and PRI members to understand their perspective of OSEAC. The insights from these interviews have been presented in the coming sections.

8.1 Teachers

A total of 60 teachers, i.e., two from each sampled school were interviewed in Karnataka.

8.1.1 Awareness and Understanding of OSEAC Among Teachers

The interviews revealed that many of teachers were familiar with the concept of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC), showing an awareness of the issue's relevance in today's digital age. Teachers recognized that crimes related to OSEAC often involve peers, friends, or strangers. However, the fact that some educators lacked awareness about this topic underscores the need for more consistent training and capacity-building efforts to ensure all teachers are equipped to address this challenge effectively.

8.1.2 Perceived Causes and Increased Risks

Teachers identified several factors contributing to the heightened risk of OSEAC, particularly in the post-pandemic era. They observed that children's increased usage of digital devices for both academic and leisure activities has led to their exposure to unsafe online environments. The proliferation of social media, combined with unsupervised access to the internet and limited awareness of digital risks, were the main risk factors as identified by teachers. Many teachers noted a rise in reported cases of OSEAC after the pandemic, attributing this to children spending more time online during lockdowns and the shift to remote learning.

8.1.3 Role of Schools in Safeguarding Children

Schools were recognized as crucial in both preventing OSEAC and supporting affected children. Many schools reportedly conduct programs on sexual health, raising awareness among students about personal safety. However, digital literacy initiatives were less commonly conducted, with relatively few schools

offering programs for parents or students focused on online safety. Teachers emphasized the importance of integrating digital safety education into school curricula and highlighted existing measures such as digital supervision, child protection committees, and awareness campaigns as steps in the right direction. Despite these efforts, the lack of standardized cyber safety protocols in many schools highlights a gap that needs addressing.

8.1.4 Parents as Key Stakeholders in Prevention

Teachers viewed parents as essential partners in protecting children from online exploitation. They emphasized the importance of parental involvement in monitoring their children's online activities, educating them about the risks and benefits of internet use, and setting clear boundaries. Simple measures, such as using parental controls and fostering open communication, were recommended to help parents guide their children in navigating the digital world safely.

8.1.5 Challenges in Addressing OSEAC and Supporting Victims

While some schools have measures such as counseling services, medical help, and maintaining the confidentiality of victims' identities in place, gaps remain in the availability and accessibility of external support services. Teachers expressed concerns about societal attitudes toward victims, noting that victim-blaming is common and can have severe psychological consequences, including reluctance to report incidents and long-term emotional distress.

8.1.6 Need for Stronger Community and Institutional Support

Teachers called for a more robust approach to tackling OSEAC at the community and institutional levels. Suggestions included creating a dedicated child protection workforce, improving police responsiveness, and leveraging media to raise awareness about the prevalence of OSEAC. Strengthening support services, enhancing digital safety education, and fostering a collaborative approach between schools, parents, and community stakeholders were identified as key strategies to reduce children's vulnerabilities and ensure their safety in an increasingly digital world.

8.2 State & District Officials

Qualitative interviews were held with a total of 41 district officials (from five districts) from departments like Panchayati Raj Institutions, Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Police Department, Special Juvenile Police Unit, Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and Cyber Crime and District Child Protection Unit (DCPU). Summary of the insights from these interviews have been presented below.

8.2.1 Awareness and Training

The qualitative enquiry of the study revealed a mixed level of awareness and preparedness among officials regarding OSEAC. While most were aware of the term OSEAC and its implications, only a

few had received specialized training on child protection and digital literacy. This gap in knowledge highlights the need for systematic training to enhance their ability to address and prevent OSEAC cases effectively. The DCPU officials on the other hand had received trainings on child sexual abuse, child protection, and POCSO. These officials also reported getting refresher trainings on these topics.

8.2.2 Prevalence and Contributing Factors

Officials widely acknowledged the prevalence of OSEAC, attributing its rise to increased internet usage among children after the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors such as unsupervised access to digital devices, lack of awareness about online safety, and the proliferation of social media were frequently cited. Socio-economic conditions, including poverty and limited education, were also seen as key contributors, further underscoring the vulnerability of marginalized communities. Officials were also of the opinion that such incidents happen when children especially girls leave home to study in colleges far away.

8.2.3 Perpetrators and Vulnerable Groups

The interviews revealed that perpetrators are often individuals known to the victims, including relatives and peers, though strangers also play a significant role. Adolescents, particularly those aged 13-18, were identified as the most at risk due to increased online activities for both academic and leisure purposes. Girls from economically disadvantaged backgrounds were seen as particularly vulnerable, often due to limited parental supervision and lower awareness about online risks. Some officials also mentioned that more boys than girls get abused online but such cases do not come to light.

“Although children from all sections of society fall prey to such incidents, those from economically and socially weaker sections are particularly more vulnerable”

– DCPU Official

8.2.4 Forms of OSEAC and Reporting Challenges

Officials reported encountering various forms of OSEAC such as the unauthorized sharing of private photos, extortion, and online harassment. While cases are reported regularly, systemic challenges like insufficient resources, lack of inter-departmental coordination, and delayed responses hinder timely interventions. There is also a need for better mechanisms to handle the circulation of child sexual abuse material.

8.2.5 Preventive Measures and Inter-Departmental Collaboration

Departments have taken steps such as conducting awareness campaigns, monitoring abusive content, and providing counseling services. DCPU officials reported that trainings have been given to hold meetings on child safety policies in every gram panchayat. However, collaboration between departments and with digital platforms and telecom companies remains limited, which restricts the effectiveness of these measures.

8.2.6 Support Services and Accessibility

While external support services such as child helplines and NGO initiatives exist, their accessibility and reach are limited. Strengthening these services by providing adequate resources, improving accessibility, and standardizing response protocols were emphasized as critical steps to support victims better.

8.2.7 Role of Parents and Schools

Officials stressed the importance of parental supervision in ensuring children's online safety. Parents were encouraged to monitor internet usage, set time limits for digital activities, and educate children about safe online practices. Schools, on the other hand, were advised to play a proactive role by integrating digital literacy and sex education into their curricula, offering counselling services, and creating awareness about online risks and reporting mechanisms.

8.2.8 Social Norms and Post-Pandemic Impact

The normalization of social media use among children and the availability of personal digital devices were identified as key social norms influencing OSEAC prevalence. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the issue as children spent more time online for education and recreation, often without adequate supervision.

8.2.9 Recommendations by Officials

The recommendations emphasize the need for a comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing OSEAC. It is essential to mandate training programs for officials across departments, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to handle cases related to child protection and digital safety effectively. Collaboration between various stakeholders, including government departments, schools, and digital platforms, must be strengthened to ensure cohesive efforts in safeguarding children. Accessibility to support services for victims, such as counselling and medical assistance, should be improved by providing adequate resources and standardizing response mechanisms.

Awareness programs targeting children, parents, and educators should be prioritized, focusing on digital literacy, online safety, and the importance of reporting mechanisms. Schools must integrate these elements into their curricula and actively engage with parents to foster a safer online environment. The child helpline number 1098 should be promoted more. Additionally, establishing a dedicated child protection workforce can enhance the ability to respond to OSEAC cases efficiently, while stricter enforcement of existing laws and punitive measures for perpetrators can act as a deterrent. The officials also iterated that the laws and policies should change time to time in accordance with the evolving technologies.

8.3 NGO Representatives/Academicians

From Karnataka, 2 NGO officials/academicians (from CARE NGO & Ananya Education & Empowerment Institution) were interviewed as part of the qualitative enquiry of the study. The NGOs and academicians interviewed focus primarily on advocacy, child rights, and women's empowerment. Their work includes addressing Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) by conducting awareness programs that promote responsible internet use. These organizations engage with children and parents to educate them about the benefits and risks of digital platforms, emphasizing the dangers of unmonitored mobile usage and online interactions.

8.3.1 Efforts to Address OSEAC

To combat OSEAC, these organizations implement comprehensive awareness programs. They conduct sessions with children to encourage safe online practices and emphasize the importance of privacy and caution while navigating digital spaces. Parents are educated about the risks associated with unsupervised internet use and the necessity of monitoring their children's activities. Additionally, schools and colleges are involved in digital literacy campaigns to enhance understanding of online threats and ways to mitigate them.

8.3.2 Contributing Factors to OSEAC

The officials affirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased children's screen time as online education became a necessity. This shift led to the widespread use of mobile devices, which often extended beyond educational purposes to leisure activities. In urban areas like Bangalore, access to technology and high internet penetration further exposed children to online threats. Children's natural curiosity, combined with limited parental oversight and a lack of awareness about online dangers, made them particularly vulnerable to exploitation by online predators.

8.3.3 Challenges in Reporting

Underreporting remains a major challenge due to societal stigma, fear of judgment, and the lack of trust in authorities. Many children hesitate to disclose incidents of exploitation, fearing reprimand from parents or further victimization. Parents, in turn, often refrain from reporting due to concerns about their family's reputation and uncertainty about the legal process. The officials believe that institutional apathy and insensitivity from law enforcement exacerbate the issue, discouraging families from seeking justice.

8.3.4 Criminal Motives and Operations

The officials reported that the perpetrators often approach children through online platforms such as social media, gaming networks, and chatrooms, presenting themselves as friends or mentors. They build trust before exploiting victims emotionally and psychologically, using blackmail and manipulation to maintain control. The experts were of the opinion that organized networks frequently facilitate these activities, employing covert techniques like data tracking and content manipulation to target children. Financial gain, psychological gratification, and a history of personal exploitation are among the common motives driving these crimes.

8.3.5 Vulnerabilities of Children

Children's developmental stage makes them particularly impressionable, leaving them susceptible to manipulation. The experts mentioned that psychological factors such as low self-esteem, loneliness, and peer pressure further amplify this vulnerability. Urban children, with greater access to digital platforms, face unique risks related to social media and online interactions. Meanwhile, children from socio-economically marginalized backgrounds often lack the guidance and digital literacy needed to navigate the internet safely, increasing their exposure to exploitation.

8.3.6 Gap in Law Enforcement

Gaps in law enforcement and institutional response to OSEAC cases remain a significant concern. Delays in reporting and investigation, often due to social stigma and lack of awareness, hinder timely action. Law enforcement agencies frequently lack specialized training in handling cyber-enabled child exploitation, leading to challenges in evidence collection and victim support. Additionally, coordination between different agencies—such as police, child welfare committees, and cybercrime units—remains weak, resulting in fragmented responses. The absence of child-friendly reporting mechanisms and inadequate digital forensic infrastructure further limit the effectiveness of interventions. Strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring survivor-centric approaches, and improving inter-agency coordination are crucial to addressing these gaps effectively.

8.3.7 Recommendations

Promoting digital literacy among parents and caregivers is essential to help them understand the platforms their children use and guide them in recognizing online risks. Building trust within families and schools ensures children feel safe reporting inappropriate interactions. Teachers must be trained to recognize signs of online abuse and respond with empathy. Schools should develop policies to safeguard children from online threats.

Community involvement is critical, with local organizations, NGOs, and community leaders playing an active role in raising awareness and providing support. Reporting mechanisms must be accessible, confidential, and widely promoted to encourage victims and families to come forward. At the district

level, law enforcement, medical professionals, and social workers must collaborate and undergo regular training to handle OSEAC cases sensitively and effectively.

8.4 Community Members

Focus Group Discussions were conducted with community members (one from each of the five districts in Karnataka). Key insights from these qualitative discussions have been presented below.

8.4.1 Usage of Mobile Phones Among Children

Children's daily routines include attending tuitions after school and spending time playing with friends. Younger children tend to watch cartoons, while older ones prefer videos and movies. Online engagement has become a notable aspect of their routines, with children spending an average of one to two hours online daily. Their activities include watching videos, browsing social media, playing online games, and engaging in educational content. While most children use their parents' mobile phones for these activities, those who own their own devices show a preference for using them.

Older children increasingly use platforms like Instagram and Facebook, and there is a growing trend of searching for and creating reels, highlighting the influence of digital media and an inclination toward content creation among the younger generation. YouTube emerged as a commonly used platform among children. While it can be considered safe when used in the YouTube Kids mode, it still requires active monitoring to ensure that children access age-appropriate content.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shift to online education increased children's exposure to OSEAC. Participants noted a rise in incidents reported on television and highlighted how prolonged use of mobile phones during the pandemic has led to a surge in children's online activity and subsequent vulnerability to online exploitation.

8.4.2 Awareness About OSEAC

The community members initially lacked awareness of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC). After the concept was explained, they identified several factors contributing to children's vulnerability, including low self-esteem, lack of supervision at home and school, and the influence of poor role models. Peer pressure, unstable family environments, and socio-economic challenges were also recognized as contributing factors. While participants were familiar with risks such as cyberbullying, defamation, online harassment, and the leaking of personal content, they had limited knowledge of specific issues related to OSEAC.

8.4.3 Vulnerable Groups

OSEAC is most prevalent among females aged 16 to 18. Participants highlighted that societal norm, gender biases, and the lack of awareness about online risks contribute to the vulnerability of this demographic.

8.4.4 Reporting Mechanisms

Community members discussed various reporting mechanisms available for addressing issues related to OSEAC. These include raising complaints with the police or approaching child help centers like Makkala Sahayavani Kendra, which provide support and assistance to children in distress. For cyber-related crimes, children and their families can contact the 1098 Child Helpline. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of children informing their schools and parents about any issues they encounter.

8.4.5 Role of Parents and Teachers

Parents play a critical role in ensuring the online safety of their children. They should avoid providing mobile devices unnecessarily and monitor their children's activities to ensure they access age-appropriate content. Open communication about online risks is crucial. Teachers also have an essential role in educating children about the responsible use of mobile phones, highlighting both their benefits and risks. Schools should promote awareness about online safety and encourage offline education, which can help reduce screen time and encourage physical activities and traditional learning methods.

8.4.6 Community's Response to OSEAC

OSEAC victims often face negative treatment within their communities, including feelings of shame, fear, and social isolation. Such experiences can lead to long-lasting impacts on their mental and emotional well-being, as they may avoid public spaces and normal social interactions.

The discussions revealed a lack of concern within the community when incidents of OSEAC involve children. Participants acknowledged the need for the community to take greater responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of children. Challenges such as public exposure and potential negative impacts on the child's future were identified as barriers to reporting incidents. Handling such cases with care and discretion is critical to protect the child's privacy and well-being.

8.4.7 Improving Support Services

Participants suggested that district-level support services could be improved by collaborating with Internet Service Providers to monitor and restrict harmful content. Raising awareness about online safety, ensuring prompt responses to abuse reports, and providing resources for victims were recommended as crucial steps.

9

Conclusion & Recommendations

9.1 Key Takeaways

The findings of the study highlighted the urgent need to address the growing threat of Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) in Karnataka. The findings reveal multifaceted issues characterized by varying levels of awareness, vulnerability, and access to support systems across age groups, gender, and rural-urban divides. Some key takeaways from the study are listed below –

A. Vulnerability

- Online friendships were minimal among younger children but increased in the 15-18 age group.
- Social media usage surged among older children post-COVID, driven by continued online engagement habits and virtual learning.
- Children's online engagement significantly increased with age, with a notable shift towards independent device use in the 15-18 age group.

B. Prevalence and Platforms

- Older children, particularly those aged 15–18 years, reported higher exposure to unsafe online experiences, emphasizing the need for age-specific intervention strategies.
- 5% of children aged 15-18 reported feeling unsafe or embarrassed online, with Instagram accounting for 77% of such incidents.
- Among the 15-18 aged children who had unsafe/embarrassing experiences online, 53% reported that the perpetrator was an unknown person, while 35% indicated the involvement of a known person, and 12% experienced incidents involving both.
- 15% of children engaging with strangers online faced immediate harm, highlighting significant risks.
- Inconsistent law enforcement responses and the lack of standardized protocols for addressing OSEAC cases were key concerns for stakeholders.
- As a support measure, only 34% parents reported incidents to police as opposed to 50% who deleted the chat history and blocked the perpetrators' accounts.

C. Awareness and Supervision

- Only 43% of parents reported frequently monitoring their child's screen time, and only 20% of children had attended digital safety sessions.
- Most parents lacked awareness of their child's online interactions, despite high-risk perception among children.
- While awareness of risks associated with online interactions increased with age, younger children exhibited significant knowledge gaps, making them highly vulnerable.
- Schools are crucial platforms for awareness programs, and partnerships with NGOs can ensure consistent and inclusive messaging across demographics.

D. Risk Perception

- Children demonstrated high awareness of OSEAC risks but lacked robust digital safety practices.
- Female children consistently demonstrated higher awareness of risks, reflecting targeted safety messaging. However, boys' lower risk perception highlights a critical gap in outreach.

The gap between self-reported cases by children (5%) and parental reports (14%) highlights the sensitive nature of OSEAC, as many children hesitated to disclose their experiences to a research interviewer due to fear, shame, stigma, or distrust. Discussions with district and state-level officials further revealed that case reporting remains low due to various personal, cultural, institutional, and legal barriers. However, the risk profiling conducted in this study provides valuable insights into children's vulnerabilities—for instance, 95% of the children interviewed use devices like mobile phones and laptops for extended periods, yet only a third of them (30%) were aware about at least 5 digital safety skills. Only 43% of parents reported frequently monitoring their child's screen time. Further, only 20% of the children attended any digital safety awareness sessions. Moreover, secondary literature also confirms a global rise in OSEAC cases, including in India. Despite the low self-reported prevalence, this remains a critical issue that requires urgent attention from authorities to facilitate evidence-based policymaking.

9.2 Conclusion

The survey findings highlight the multifaceted dynamics influencing Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children (OSEAC) in Karnataka, analyzed through the **Ecological Systems Theory (EST)**

framework. The results emphasize the interplay of individual, relational, institutional, and societal factors contributing to children's vulnerabilities and protections.

A. Individual Level (Microsystem):

Children's personal characteristics, such as emotional maturity, self-esteem, and awareness of online risks, significantly influenced their susceptibility to OSEAC. Adolescents, in particular, were more active online, engaging in self-expression, communication, and content sharing on social media platforms. While this increased online presence fostered confidence and independence, it also heightened their risk of exploitation, as perpetrators could easily exploit their digital footprints. At a developmental stage where emotional and cognitive abilities are still evolving, children are more impressionable and prone to absorbing external influences, including harmful online interactions. This vulnerability is exacerbated by psychological factors such as low self-esteem, loneliness, peer pressure, and a desire for connection. Coupled with easy access to technology and social media, these factors significantly increase the risk of OSEAC. Younger children relied more heavily on parental guidance, but as they grew older, they demonstrated greater independence in device usage, ownership, and interactions with online strangers, further exposing them to risks.

B. Interactions and Relationships (Mesosystem):

The mesosystem focuses on the relationships and interactions within children's immediate environments, such as families, schools, and peer groups, and how these dynamics influence their susceptibility to OSEAC. The data highlighted the importance of parental supervision, open communication, and strong familial bonds in mitigating risks. However, peer relationships, while essential for social development, also emerged as a potential source of vulnerability. A growing concern is peer-to-peer exploitation, where perpetrators recruit or pressure children into exploiting their peers. In many cases, children may be unaware that they are being coerced into furthering such exploitation. The inherent trust and confidence children place in friends and relatives can be exploited by criminals among these trusted circles, who may misguide and involve them in harmful activities. These reveal the need for targeted interventions to raise awareness among children about identifying and resisting peer-led manipulation. Schools and communities must also prioritize fostering safe environments where children can discuss and address such risks openly.

C. Social Settings and Institutions (Exosystem):

The exosystem encompasses the role of institutions and external systems, such as educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and child protection services, in shaping children's vulnerability or resilience to OSEAC. These systems significantly influence the preventive measures, reporting mechanisms, and support services available to children. For instance, family as an institution plays a pivotal role in shaping children's behaviour and resilience. Experts have noted that children raised in abusive home environments are particularly vulnerable to online sexual abuse, as the lack of emotional safety and support may drive them to seek comfort from inappropriate sources online.

Schools and community organizations must also strengthen their capacity to educate children on safe online practices and provide effective reporting channels. Similarly, law enforcement and child protection services must ensure timely responses to incidents of OSEAC to foster trust and encourage reporting. Strengthening these institutional roles is critical to mitigating risks and enhancing protective factors for children.

D. Socio-Cultural Factors (Macrosystem):

The macrosystem examines the broader socio-cultural context, including cultural norms, values, and societal attitudes toward OSEAC. In the Indian context, societal attitudes toward victims often perpetuate stigma, victim-blaming, and shame, deterring children from disclosing abuse incidents to their parents. Parents, in turn, may hesitate to report cases due to fears of societal judgment and tarnishing their family's reputation, leading to underreporting and revictimization. This cultural dynamic creates a cycle of silence and inaction, leaving children more vulnerable to exploitation. Addressing these deep-rooted cultural barriers requires concerted efforts to promote victim-centric attitudes, encourage open communication, and dismantle the stigma surrounding OSEAC.

E. Historical Events and Life Events (Chronosystem):

The chronosystem encompasses significant life events and historical transitions that shape an individual's development and vulnerability. The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns serve as a profound example of a historical event that reshaped children's online behaviours and exposure. With schools closed and physical interactions curtailed, children spent unprecedented amounts of time online for both education and recreation. This unregulated access increased their exposure to unsafe digital environments, and thereby increasing their vulnerability to online exploitation and abuse. Teachers and district officials noted a significant rise in OSEAC cases post-pandemic, attributing this to the rapid adoption of digital devices, unmonitored internet usage, and increased engagement with social media platforms during lockdowns.

Additionally, pivotal life transitions, such as older children moving to hostels or colleges far away from home, introduce unique challenges. Such transitions often entail a sudden decrease in parental supervision and a shift in social support systems. According to a DCPU official, these children may face increased risks of OSEAC as they navigate newfound independence and adapt to their changing environments. These experiences illustrate how cumulative life changes amplify children's susceptibility to OSEAC.

F. Implications:

The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions across all ecological levels. Individual-level efforts should focus on enhancing children's digital literacy, self-esteem, and awareness of online risks.

Family-centered programs must empower parents with tools for effective supervision and communication. Schools and institutions should prioritize integrated digital safety curricula and streamlined reporting mechanisms. At the societal level, addressing cultural stigmas, improving law enforcement responses, and ensuring equitable access to resources are essential to creating a protective environment for children.

This study reaffirms that a holistic, multi-stakeholder approach, informed by the EST framework, is essential to mitigate the risks of OSEAC and safeguard children's well-being in an increasingly digital world.

9.3 Recommendations

By implementing some actionable steps, Karnataka can create a robust, child-friendly digital environment, minimizing the risks of OSEAC while empowering children and their caregivers to navigate the internet safely

A. Institutional Interventions

- Foster **open communication between parents and children** about safe online behaviour and risks.
- Introduce **mobile-based feedback forms** for victims and parents to assess the quality of support services
- Develop **age-appropriate digital safety toolkits** for both children and parents. Make digital literacy and online safety a compulsory part of the school curriculum, starting from the primary level.
- **Digital Safety Programs:** Launch widespread awareness campaigns and workshops tailored for schools
- Develop **age-appropriate modules on online safety and risks of OSEAC**, to be incorporated into **school curricula**. Ensure regular sensitization programs for students, teachers, and parents.
- Launch **peer-led education programs**, where older students' mentor younger peers about online safety practices.
- **Strengthen School-Based Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish clear and accessible reporting channels within schools to address incidents of OSEAC. Train teachers and counselors to handle disclosures sensitively and provide immediate support.
- Provide schoolteachers with training on identifying signs of online exploitation among children and implementing classroom interventions.
- Develop toolkits for teachers to conduct engaging workshops on online safety.

- **Engage ICT firms** in awareness programs, leveraging their platforms to amplify safety messages. The child helpline number 1098 should be promoted more.
- Partner with local self-help groups (SHGs) and Panchayati Raj institutions to **organize workshops for parents in rural areas** on internet usage and monitoring children's activities.
- Collaborate with **local NGOs** to provide counselling, legal aid, and rehabilitation services.
- Partner with **academic institutions** to conduct regular state-wide studies on OSEAC prevalence, risk factors, and intervention outcomes.
- **Conduct longitudinal surveys to analyse trends** in the prevalence and incidence of OSEAC cases. This approach supports evidence-based policymaking in response to the continuous evolution of technology.
- Establish **district-level helplines and support centres** for OSEAC victims.
- **Expand Child Protection (CP) Services on OSEAC:** Increase the availability and accessibility of specialized CP services, such as counseling, legal aid, and victim support, tailored to OSEAC cases. Ensure these services are present at both district and state levels.
- Create **capacity-building initiatives** to train frontline responders, including law enforcement and social workers.
- **Enhance Law Enforcement Capacity:** Provide training for police and judicial functionaries on the nuances of OSEAC, including the psychological impacts on victims and the importance of swift, victim-centered responses.
- **Equip law enforcement** with advanced tools for tracking & combating OSEAC, such as **AI based tools** to monitor and analyse illegal online activities
- Organise **sensitization programs for judges & prosecutors** to improve understanding of OSEAC dynamics and the trauma experienced by child victims.
- Create Multi-stakeholder Response Mechanism by establishing coordination protocols between schools, law enforcement, child protection services, and community organizations to ensure a comprehensive response to OSEAC cases.

B. Community Based Interventions

- Launch state-wide media campaigns on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp, focusing on actionable tips for online safety.
- Develop interactive mobile applications with gamified content to educate children about safe internet practices.

- **Enhance Community Engagement:** Conduct community awareness campaigns to educate parents, guardians, and community leaders about OSEAC risks, reporting mechanisms, and the importance of fostering safe online behaviors.
- Create "**Digital Safety Champions**" in communities who are trained to act as first responders for reporting OSEAC incidents.
- Hold **quarterly community consultations** to evaluate awareness campaigns and gather input for improvement.

C. Policy Advocacy

- **POCSO Act:** Introduce a **dedicated chapter on OSEAC** in the **POCSO Act**, explicitly covering online grooming, cyber enticement, and digital exploitation. Define **specific penal provisions** for emerging OSEAC threats like deepfake child abuse material, AI-generated exploitation, and live-streamed abuse.
- **IT Act, 2000:** Strengthen **Section 67B of the IT Act** to impose higher penalties for platforms that fail to prevent circulation of child sexual abuse material.
- **Mandate social media platforms** to content moderation and cooperate with law enforcement for timely removal of child abuse materials. Impose **hefty fines and service bans** for non-compliance with content moderation policies on child sexual abuse material (CSAM).
- Make it **mandatory for social media and messaging platforms to store encrypted user activity logs** for a specified period to aid law enforcement investigations while ensuring privacy safeguards.
- **Partner with tech platforms** to enhance safety measures, such as stricter content filters and child-specific account settings.
- Make **digital safety education compulsory** across all school levels under the National Education Policy (NEP). Ensure inclusion of OSEAC-specific chapters and child protection policies in the curricula.
- Strengthen **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP)** with a **dedicated OSEAC reporting channel** linked to law enforcement.
- Introduce **anonymous complaint mechanisms** with fast-track legal action for victims and whistleblowers.
- Create a **Karnataka OSEAC Task Force** to oversee prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation strategies. Formulate state-specific action plans that address the unique socio-cultural and technological contexts contributing to OSEAC risks.
- Advocate for **stringent state-level cybercrime policies** specifically targeting OSEAC perpetrators.

- Advocate for the inclusion of AI-driven features like real-time alerts for risky behaviour (e.g., sharing personal information) on social media
- Advocate for **parental use of monitoring apps/tools** with built-in privacy safeguards.
- Push for **harmonized national protocols** to address cross-state border online abuse cases effectively.
- Promote awareness on **effective use of existing reporting mechanisms** like hotlines for online abuse.
- **Advocate for victim-centred policies** that prioritize victim safety, privacy, and psychological well-being.

9.4 Suggested Action Plan

1. Short-Term Action Plan

- Initiate **partnerships** with **schools and community organizations** for digital safety workshops.
- Roll out **pilot programs** for parental education on monitoring and fostering trust.
- Strengthen **reporting mechanisms** by improving hotline accessibility and awareness.

2. Medium - Term Action Plan

- Design and distribute **digital safety toolkits** tailored for different age groups through platforms like NIE of TOI.
- Advocate for **increased funding** to establish district-level victim support services.
- Encourage partnerships between **tech platforms and civil society** for sustained safety innovations.

3. Long Term Action Plan

- Institutionalize OSEAC awareness as part of the **school curriculum** across Karnataka.
- Engage with policymakers and tech platforms for **systemic changes** in online safety standards.
- Develop and enforce **comprehensive offender management programs**, integrating rehabilitation strategies.





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