Impact assessment 2024-25

School Support Program implemented by Akanksha Foundation

Apple India

December 2024

Contents

Acknowledgement

The study has been conducted by Grant Thornton Bharat LLP ("Grant Thornton" or "GT") appointed by Apple India for the School Support program in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, Maharashtra. We would like to thank Apple India and Akanksha Foundation for their continued support and assistance in carrying out the study. We are also grateful to the students, teachers, parents, SMC members, school staff, and other stakeholders who interacted with us during the study.

1. Executive summary

Apple India partnered with Akanksha Foundation in driving the School Support Program across schools in Maharashtra specifically in Pune, Nagpur, and Mumbai. The schools follow a unique model of holistic learning that goes beyond classrooms and focuses on development of socio-emotional skills and values of young individuals with high parental engagement. The schools are also equipped with educators with strong professional background to provide adequate attention to the children and maintain their progress.

Apple India engaged Grant Thornton Bharat LLP to conduct an impact assessment of the program. The objective of the assessment was to study the impact of the program activities. This study was conducted on site in Mumbai and virtually at Nagpur and Pune. The aim was to understand the perspectives of primary beneficiaries and the relevant stakeholders of the program.

Key findings of the study include -

Relevance: Access to quality education has equipped the students with the knowledge and skills needed for better career opportunities, enabling them to improve their socioeconomic status, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty. The program aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education. It has prioritized underserved schools, ensuring that no child is left behind due to financial barriers. Providing access to technology has enabled students from lower-income communities to gain digital literacy skills critical for the modern world.

Effectiveness: Technology-supported classrooms have encouraged group projects and collaborative problem-solving, fostering teamwork and critical thinking skills among students. Platforms such as educational apps and e-learning tools allowed teachers to personalize lessons based on the unique learning needs of each student. Professional development sessions included in the program also empowered teachers to use technology confidently and creatively in the classroom.

100%

Students stated that the interactive classroom teaching has brushed up their critical thinking and problem solving skills over the years.

Efficiency: The professional development sessions have also reduced apprehension about adopting new technologies, enabling teachers to embrace modern teaching tools confidently. Peer learning has emerged as a powerful approach in professional development sessions for teachers, fostering collaboration, mutual support, and shared growth.

Coherence: The program aligns well with NEP 2020 and ensures students from marginalized communities have equal opportunities to access high-quality education, provides digital

100%

Teachers stated that Group projects, digital storytelling, and collaborative assignments create a sense of camaraderie and excitement, encouraging students to be present for group activities.

tools (iPads, tablets) and establishes smart classrooms equipped with Apple TVs, fostering digital literacy among students.

Impact: As per the interaction with the students, they use technology to create presentations, perform skits, or complete projects, which are highlighted to their peers and community. The excitement of participating in such activities boosts their willingness to attend school consistently. The program has established robust communication systems, such as parent-teacher WhatsApp groups, and regular meetings, to keep parents informed about their children's academic progress and school activities.

100%

Teachers stated that Group projects, digital storytelling, and collaborative assignments create a sense of camaraderie and excitement, encouraging students to be present for group activities.

Sustainability: With access to personalized resources, students have been able to strengthen their foundational skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, enabling students to revisit and master concepts they may have struggled with previously. Beyond academics as well, students have developed critical thinking, collaboration and critical thinking skills that ultimately prepare them for higher education and workforce.

2. Introduction

a. Background and context

Children from disadvantaged social backgrounds attend government schools in several states, where females' education is frequently viewed as a formality for future marriage opportunities. Government schools in India face several challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, outdated curriculum, lacking in funds, and a poor teacher – student ratio.

According to a study in Maharashtra by Child Rights and You, it was found that out of 122 government schools in 69% schools, teachers and /or students were cleaning toilets. The survey also indicated that 13% of the schools did not have a sturdy building and 37% did not have a compound wall. Teacher training is done only for a few teachers who are expected to then pass on the information to a larger group[1]. Due to these challenges, many government schools tend to shut down hence affecting the community at large. Akanksha Foundation adopts such schools and revives them. Based on the PPP model, the Akanksha School Project seeks to enhance the standard of instruction in municipal schools while addressing certain issues that marginalised children encounter. The project's main goals are to increase attendance and retain students while developing a framework that emphasises socioemotional learning in addition to academic child development, and notably, parental and community involvement.

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 has also significant relevance in the context of the program. The NEP emphasizes providing equitable access to quality education for all, especially to marginalized and poor groups. The policy also recognizes the importance of digital and online education, teacher training and professional development.

b. About the program

Apple India has supported Akanksha Foundation for their school support program. It focuses on creating scalable models of quality schools for the less fortunate communities. The model works both within and beyond the classrooms to provide the children a holistic learning experience.

1 https://www.cry.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Budgeting-for-School-Education-in-Maharashtra.pdf

	AY 2021 – 22	AY 2022 – 23	AY 2023 – 24
Students	2,752	3,607	3,990
Teachers	135	174	163

Table 1: Student and teacher outreach

The three key components of the program are:

Figure 1: Key components of the program

Under the program, Apple India supports nine (09) schools i.e. four (04) in Pune and Nagpur each and one (01) school in Mumbai.

Nagpur

1. Late Gopalrao Motghare NMC English Medium School (LGMNPS)
2. Babulban English NMC Medium School (BNPS)
3. Late Baburaoji Bobade NMC English Medium School (LBBNPS)
4. Ramnagar NMC English Medium School (RNPS)

Mumbai

1. Sitaram Mills Compound Mumbai Public School (SMCMPS)

Pune

1. Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation English Medium School (BOPEMS)
2. Late Dattoba Ramchandra Kale School (LDRKEMS)
3. Late Anantrao Pawar Memorial English Medium School (LAPMEMS)
4. Anusyabai Namdeo Waghere English Medium School (ANWEMS)

c. Akanksha Schools – Overview

Below are the key components that highlight the Akanksha Schools –

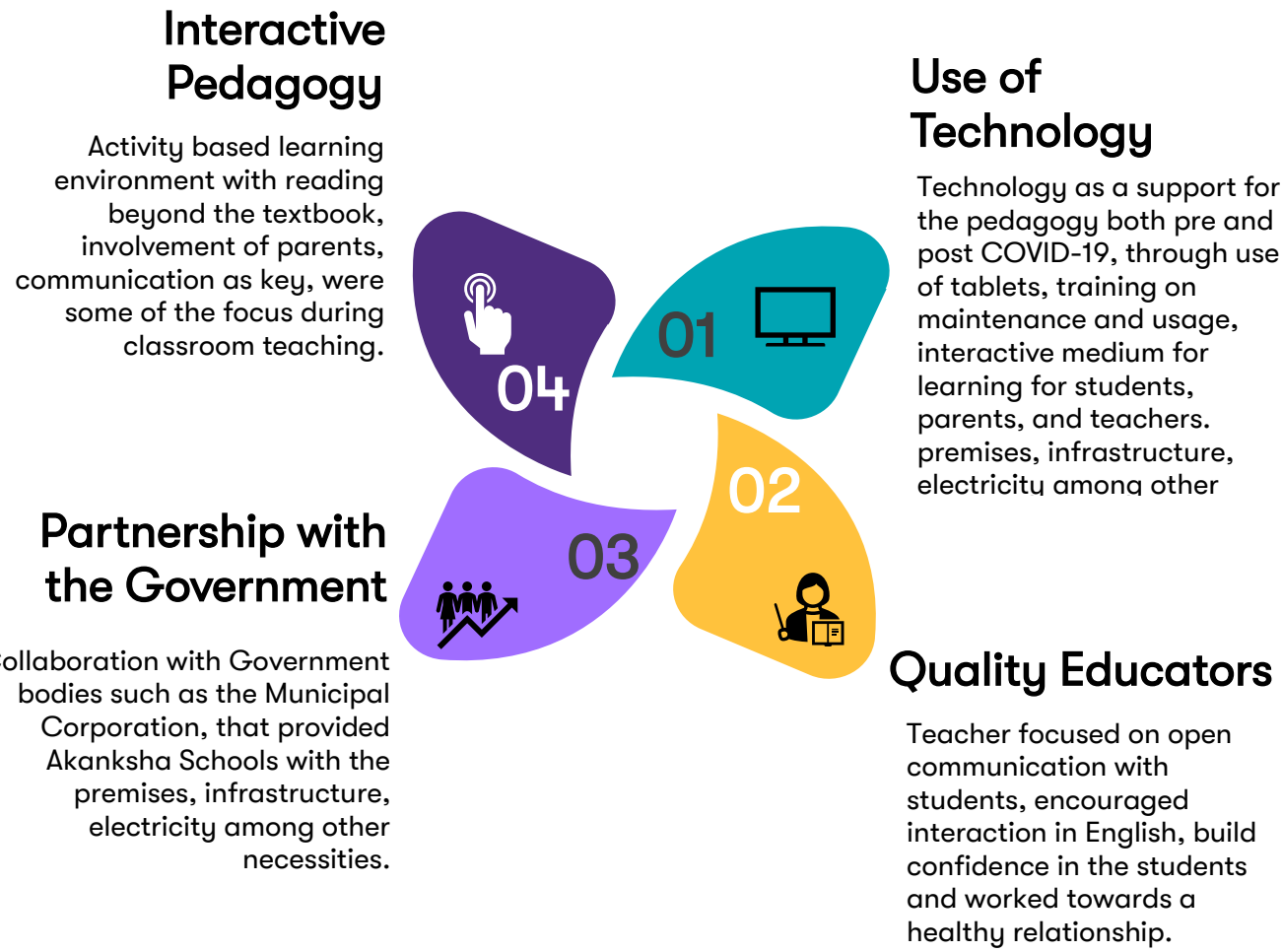


Figure 2: Akanksha Schools- overview

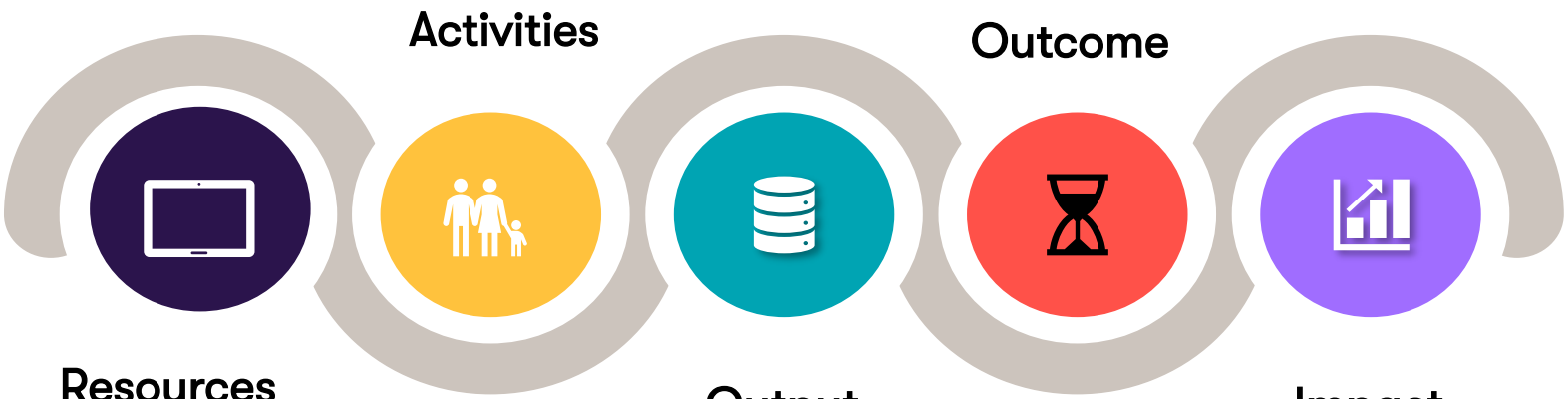
d. Tech based best practices of the program

1. **Personalized Learning:** Leveraging iPads and apps like RAZ (Reading A-Z) and Puppet Pals, these schools ensure tailored learning experiences for students, catering to their unique needs and progress.
2. **Interactive and Collaborative Learning:** Apps like Google Slides, Scratch Jr, and PHET simulations promote teamwork and interactive content creation. These tools engage students through group projects and hands-on problem-solving activities.
3. **Data-Driven Instruction:** Teachers use digital platforms such as Edustem and real-time dashboards to monitor student progress, enabling adaptive teaching strategies based on insights from formative and summative assessments.
4. **Teacher Professional Development:** Apple-supported Akanksha schools conduct regular training sessions to integrate digital tools like quizizz, Edpuzzle, and live worksheets into lesson planning. These sessions focus on enhancing classroom practices and engaging students more effectively.
5. **Multimedia Integration:** Apps like iMovie, Book Creator, and Keynote allow students to engage in digital storytelling, video creation, and multimedia presentations, fostering creativity and communication skills.
6. **Digital Portfolios and Feedback Systems:** Students maintain digital portfolios to track their progress and receive personalized feedback, encouraging reflection and continuous improvement in their learning journey.
7. **Core Subject Focus:** Technology supports targeted intervention in English, Math, and other foundational subjects. Teachers use apps and small-group settings to address specific learning gaps effectively.
8. **Development of 21st-Century Skills:** Akanksha schools emphasize critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy through the consistent integration of technology in academic and extracurricular activities.
9. **Extended Learning Environments:** Virtual classrooms, forums, and collaborative projects expand learning opportunities beyond the physical classroom, engaging students in innovative ways.

e. Theory of change

→ Admission procedure (lottery system)
→ Technology usage and upgraded learning
→ Professional development trainings to the teachers
→ Parental engagement sessions
→ Use of SEE curriculum
→ Home visits and wellbeing calls to students

→ Improved admission of students from low-income families
→ Improved retention of students and attendance
→ Improved interest and academic performance of students
→ Better access to counselling for students and parents
→ Improved engagement and support of parents in their children's academic journey



Resources

→ Ideas
→ Funds
→ Human capital
→ Devices

Output

→ Students admitted and retained
→ Students with access to technology
→ Teachers recruited and trained
→ Parents reached out and meetings held with

Impact

→ Improved access of low-income family children to high quality education
→ Increase in literacy rate among the children in the communities
→ Groomed candidates with holistic development
→ Alignment with NEP (2020)

Figure 3: Theory of change

3. About the study

Grant Thornton Bharat LLP[2] was appointed by Apple India to conduct an impact assessment study / desktop review of school support program. To conduct the assessment, a Theory of change approach and OECD DAC Framework was used basis which key areas of enquiry were developed for each stakeholder group to obtain a holistic understanding of the program results. The study was executed by interviewing the beneficiaries of the program to gauge an overall understanding of the outcomes and impact.

The assessment included discussions with stakeholders to document their perception and feedback on the program. The key objectives of the assessment:

- To assess the impact of the school support program
- To gather feedback of the stakeholders and beneficiaries on the program
- To compare the data with the previous years

The study aimed to understand the overall process of the program through analysis of the data collected and further corroborating it with inferences from stakeholder discussions.

2 Grant Thornton Bharat LLP or GTBL is a member of Grant Thornton International Ltd. The firm is at the forefront of helping reshape the values in our profession. We are helping shape various industry ecosystems through our work across Assurance, Tax, Risk, Transactions, Technology and Consulting, and are going beyond to shape a more Vibrant Bharat. Our ESG practice constitutes of a dedicated team working to support efforts towards sustainable development. Our team understands the common challenges, and provides tailor-made solutions leveraging on our knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm.

a. Assessment approach

The assessment study was designed using the OECD DAC principles as highlighted below.

Impact

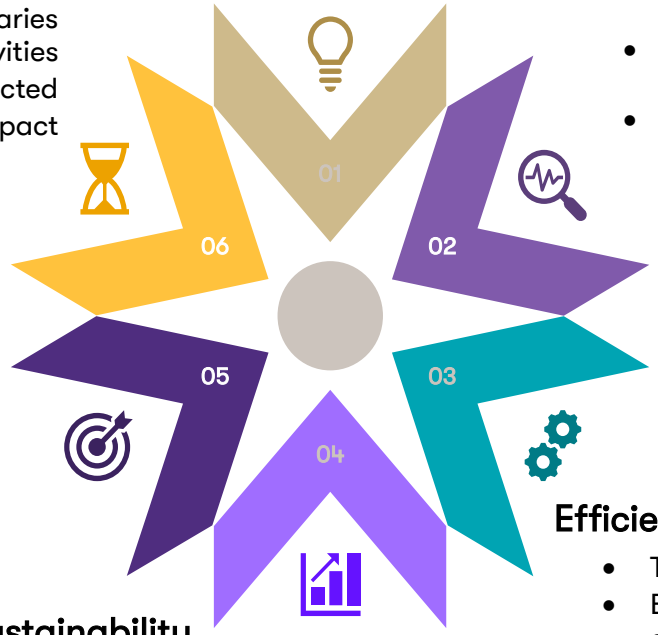
- Results of the program
- Difference in the lives of the beneficiaries due to the activities
- Number of people affected
- Any undesirable impact

Relevance

- Correlation of the program objectives with the need
- Consistency of the activities with the overall goal / objectives
- Consistency of the activities with the intended impact

Coherence

- The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.
- The extent to which other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa.



Effectiveness

- Extent of the objectives achieved or to be achieved
- Major factors influencing the achievement / non-achievement of the objectives

Efficiency

- Timely achievement of objectives
- Efficiency of the implementation process as compared to alternatives

Sustainability

- Extent of benefits to continue after funding ceases
- Major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the program or project

Figure 4: OECD DAC Framework

b. Methodology

Phase 1

- Understand project context, objectives, and approach.
- Understand various key stakeholders and output expectations.
- Draw Stakeholder-cum-Indicator map, study tools and execution plan.

Phase 2

- Review study model basis pilot run findings and make relevant modifications for next level execution.
- Conduct onsite and virtual discussions with individuals and groups
- Hold talks with relevant stakeholders for anecdotes.

Phase 3

- Collate information collected from all sources and conduct sample analysis.
- On verifying sample analysis, conduct detailed analysis.
- Prepare draft narrative report, discuss report findings, obtain relevant inputs for final report.
- Prepare and issue final report.

In consultation with Apple India, it was decided to undertake a desk-based assessment for the current year. Due to this the sample covered was minimal.

c. Data collection

Stakeholder wise tools were created for the primary interactions. Stakeholders such as students, SMC members and parents, school staff (school leader, Digital leader), and teachers were covered through focus group discussions (FGD). Given below are the areas of enquiry for the discussions.

S/N	Stakeholder	Areas of enquiry
1	Students	Experience with technology usage, relevance/ need of the program, effectiveness of classroom learning, effectiveness of Holistic development and life skills, effectiveness of parental and community engagement
2	Teachers	Experience in using the interactive pedagogy, improvement in teaching and learning, effectiveness of trainings, relevance and

S/N	Stakeholder	Areas of enquiry
		sustainability of life skills, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of technology
3	Parents and SMC	Engagement with the school and involvement in schoolwork, wellbeing calls, improvement in their life and children's academic progress
4	Akanksha school team (School leader, teachers, DLI trainer)	Interventions conducted and their experience, involvement with the program, roles and responsibilities, relevance of intervention, improvement brought by the project to the school's performance (attendance/retention), community's and parental engagement, involvement with the program, roles and responsibilities, relevance of intervention

Table 2: Areas of enquiry and sample covered

Physical visit was conducted to the Mumbai school and discussions were held with four (04) students, five (05) teachers, eight (08) parents / SMC members and two (02) school team members. Virtually discussions were held with five (05) teachers each from Nagpur and Pune.

Snapshot of Q3 impact report by Akanksha Foundation

4. Findings

The study revealed significant positive outcomes in the schools in Pune, Nagpur, and Mumbai. The findings evaluated through the OECD DAC framework highlight meaningful changes in the educational landscape for students, teachers, parents, and the schools.

a. Relevance

Community profile

Addressing resource deficits in govt. schools

- → **Limited infrastructure**
- → **Scarce technology access / digital divide**
- → **Teacher training gaps**

As per the interactions with the parents, majority of them work in the informal sector such as taxi drivers, street vendors, construction workers or domestic help. The average household size in the communities is 4 – 6 members, and completion of school up to grade 12th is the highest qualification observed among the parents. **Access to quality education has equipped the students with the knowledge and skills needed for better career opportunities, enabling them to improve their socioeconomic status, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty.** Due to the program offering high quality education over the years, parents gained confidence in the local education system, leading to increased enthusiasm for enrolment and engagement.

Supporting SDG 4 (Quality Education)

100%

parents gained confidence in the local education system, leading to increased enthusiasm for enrolment and engagement.

The program aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education. It has prioritized underserved schools, ensuring that no child is left behind due to financial barriers. **Providing access to technology has enabled students from lower-income communities to gain digital literacy skills critical for the modern world.** Along with that, enhanced teaching methodologies ensured that even students with limited prior resources can achieve academic success.

b. Effectiveness

Impact on classroom practices and learning

The program has introduced innovative tools and techniques that fundamentally changed the way teachers and students interact in classrooms. Providing devices like iPads, tablets, and Apple TVs allowed teachers to deliver lessons more interactively and efficiently. Digital resources, such as educational apps, videos, and simulations, made lessons more engaging and relatable. **Technology-supported classrooms have encouraged group projects and collaborative problem-solving, fostering teamwork and critical thinking skills among students.** Platforms such as educational apps and e-learning tools allowed teachers to personalize lessons based on the unique learning needs of each student.

As per the interaction with teachers and students, traditional rote-based learning has been replaced with active, inquiry-based learning where students engage with content at their own pace in these schools. Along with that, digital devices have also provided hands-on experiences, fostering critical thinking and curiosity. Digital content, such as 3D animations, quizzes, and games, helped the students better understand and retain complex topics in science, math, and other subjects. **The personalized learning experiences and access to adaptive learning platforms allowed students to progress at their own pace, ensuring that struggling learners get extra support while advanced learners are challenged.**

100%

Students stated that the interactive classroom teaching has brushed up their critical thinking and problem solving skills over the years.

Academic improvement

The study also focused on comparing the assessment results of all the schools in Nagpur, Pune, and Mumbai. These assessments are for English and Math conducted by Akanksha Foundation during the beginning, middle and end of the year. The purpose of the assessments is to understand the progress of their learnings over time. In the graph below, in English, Mumbai and Pune schools have made significant improvements over the years from Academic year (AY) 2021 – 24. On the other hand, schools in Nagpur have scope of improvement in their English scores as the scores reduced in AY 2023-24 in comparison to the previous year AY 2022-23. When probed during the stakeholder interactions, it was noted that since Nagpur schools have elementary grades (junior kg to 3rd grade), there is challenge of language barrier which is common across all schools that impact the learning and scores of the children. Students in elementary grades are not proficient in English and hence their scores have been affected in the recent year.

Student beneficiaries in SMCMPS, Mumbai

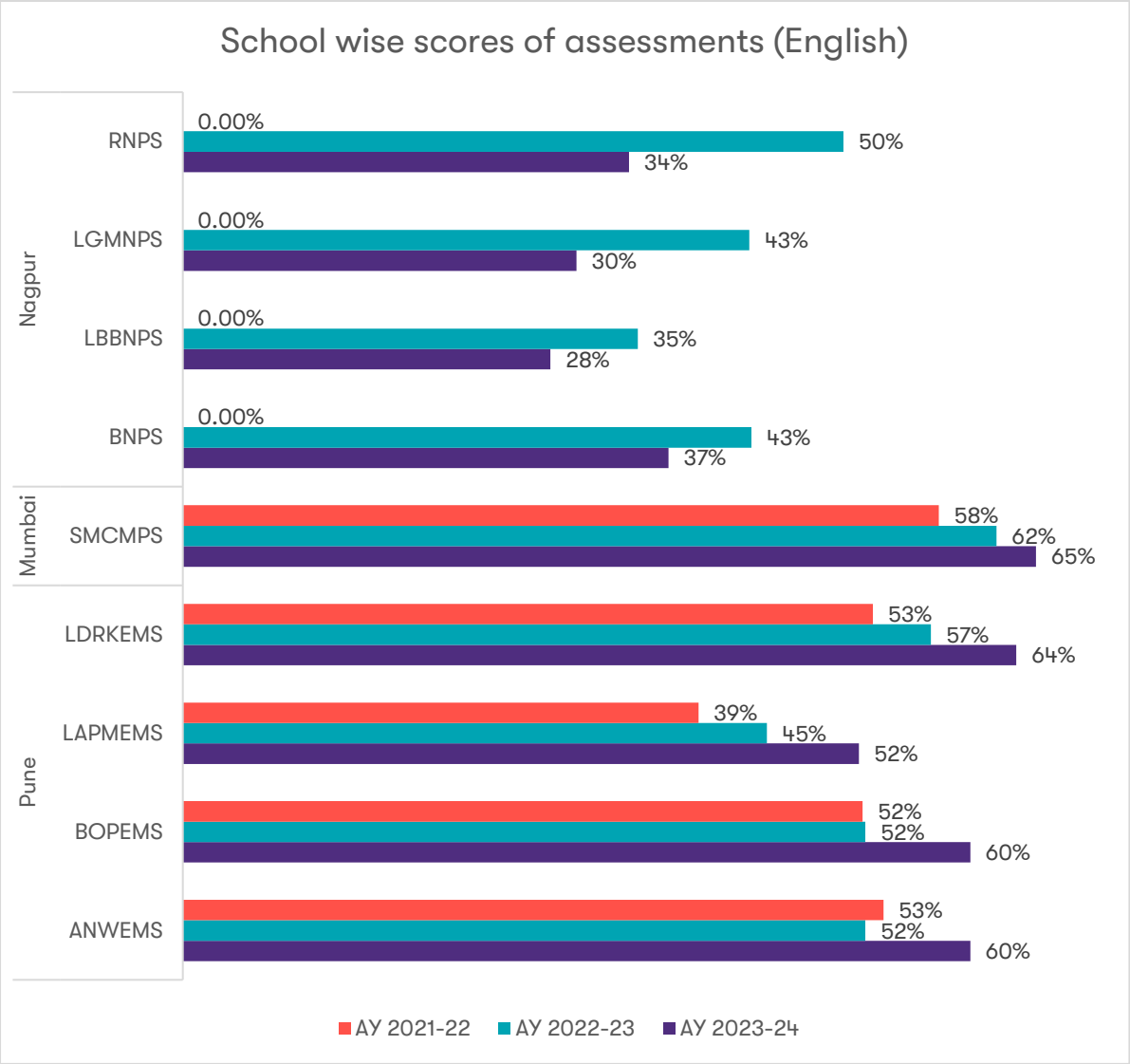


Figure 5: Assessment scores (English)

Similarly, for Math, Mumbai and Pune schools have shown improvements in their scores as compared to the previous AYs, along with LGMNPS, LBBNPS in Nagpur while RNPS has scored less in the recent AY.

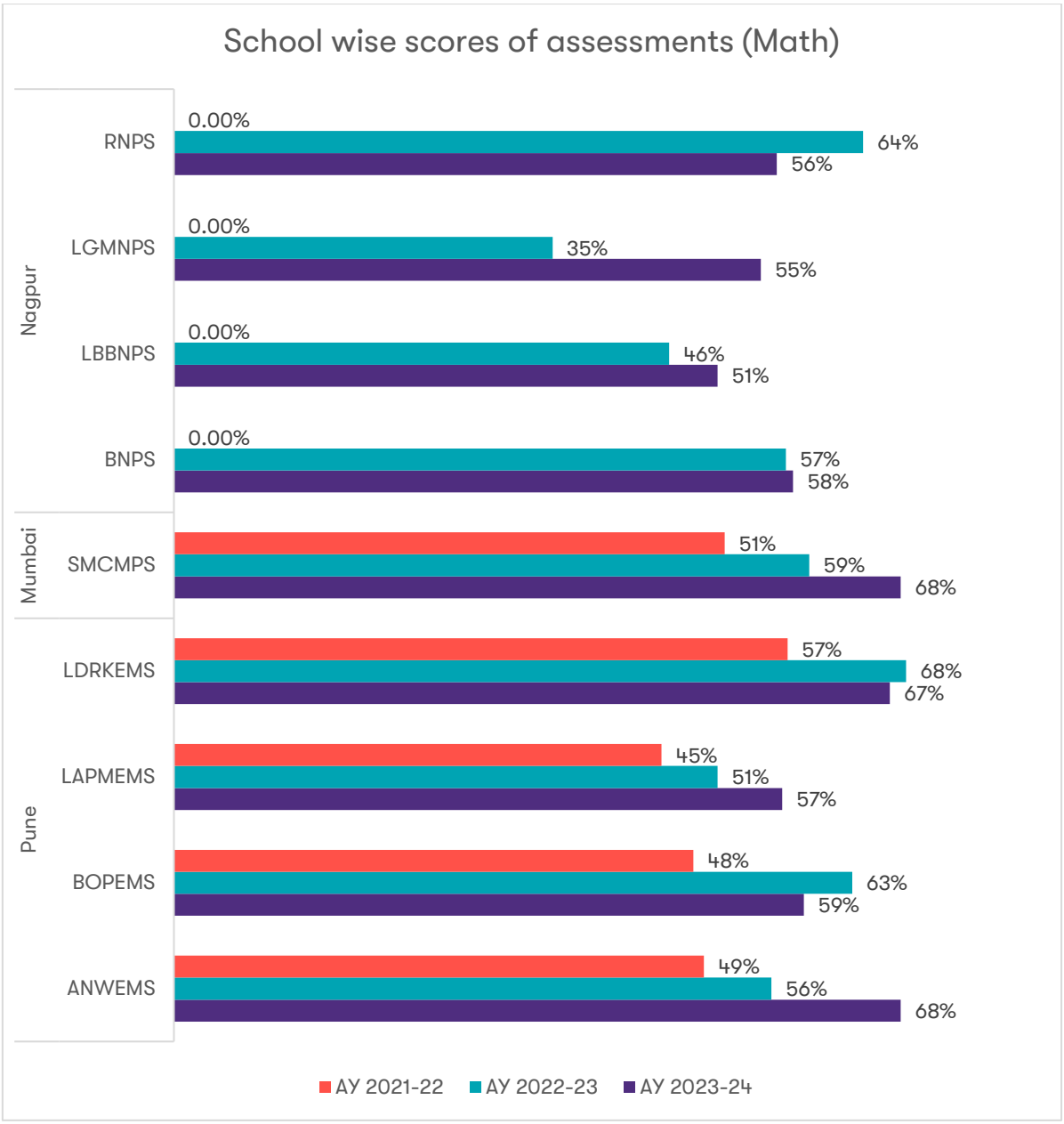


Figure 6: Assessment scores (Math)

Addressing the digital divide

The digital divide—a gap between those who have access to modern technology and those who do not—is a significant barrier to education, particularly in government schools serving economically disadvantaged communities. A school support program that equips government schools with devices such as iPads, Apple TVs, and tablets plays a crucial role in

bridging this divide. By providing students and teachers with access to digital tools, the program ensures equitable opportunities for learning and development. By providing iPads, tablets, and Apple TVs, the program ensures that students have access to the same high-quality digital tools available to their more privileged counterparts. This access allows students to engage with modern, interactive educational content that was previously inaccessible to them.

Bridging the digital divide

- → **Improved academic performance and digital literacy levels**
- → **Enhanced ability among teachers to use technology effectively in lesson delivery**

On the other hand, the program also enhanced teaching practices with technology. The devices have enabled teachers to project multimedia content, conduct virtual experiments, and use interactive apps to explain complex concepts. **Professional development sessions included in the program also empowered teachers to use technology confidently and creatively in the classroom.**

Student presentation on an assignment in an iPad

Culture of innovation and technology adoption within the school and community

The introduction of devices such as tablets, iPads, and Apple TVs have enabled schools to transition from traditional teaching methods to technology-driven, interactive learning environments This has led to transforming school culture through integration of technology in teaching and learning. The intervention of technology support has also fostered teamwork among students through group projects and assignments and these schools have become spaces where innovation thrived with students and teachers experimenting with new tools and ideas.

As per the interaction with the students and teachers in Mumbai, it was noted that students make many projects on these devices and are empowered to explore topics beyond the textbook. **Students use search engines, educational apps, and curated news platforms to research global and local issues, such as climate change, women empowerment, advancements in technology, or social challenges.** They synthesize data from multiple sources to develop a well-rounded understanding of the topic. Apps like Keynote, Canva, or Google Slides have allowed students to design visually appealing presentations with images, animations, and charts. Students have learnt how to structure their ideas logically, ensuring clarity and coherence in their narratives.

By using iPads to research trending topics, create presentations, and perform skits, students transform learning into an engaging and impactful experience. Such activities, supported by a CSR school program, not only enhance academic performance but also nurture skills that empower students to become confident communicators, critical thinkers, and socially aware individuals. The integration of technology and creative expression ensures that students are not just passive learners but active contributors to their school and community.

Younger grade student's assignment

100%

Students stated that the use of iPads in their classrooms have kept them updated about the 21st century skills and global knowledge.

c. Efficiency

Empowering educators / teachers

Professional development sessions focus on upskilling teachers in using digital tools such as iPads, tablets, and interactive platforms like Apple TV. As per the interactions, teachers learn to integrate technology into their lesson plans, transitioning from traditional methods to dynamic, tech-enabled instruction. **These sessions have also reduced apprehension about adopting new technologies, enabling teachers to embrace modern teaching tools confidently.** Teachers have become proficient in navigating apps, managing digital classrooms, and troubleshooting basic technical issues.

Tools like digital whiteboards and online quizzes provide instant feedback on student performance, helping teachers identify areas for improvement, hence they can provide real time feedback to the students. Adaptive learning platforms have also enabled teachers to tailor lessons to individual student needs.

Some topics discussed in professional development sessions

- → **Effective communication across different Grades**
- → **Daily Intention-reflection setting**
- → **How teachers can use grounding, resourcing and SEE practices in academic spaces and in different classroom**

Train the trainer model

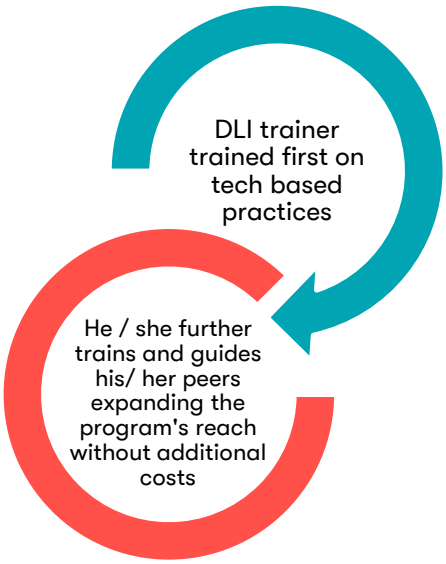


Figure 7: Train the trainer model

that enrich discussions. The practice of peer learning identified and nurtured teacher leaders who take on mentoring roles, guiding their colleagues in adopting innovative practices. These leaders inspire others, creating a ripple effect of professional growth within schools.

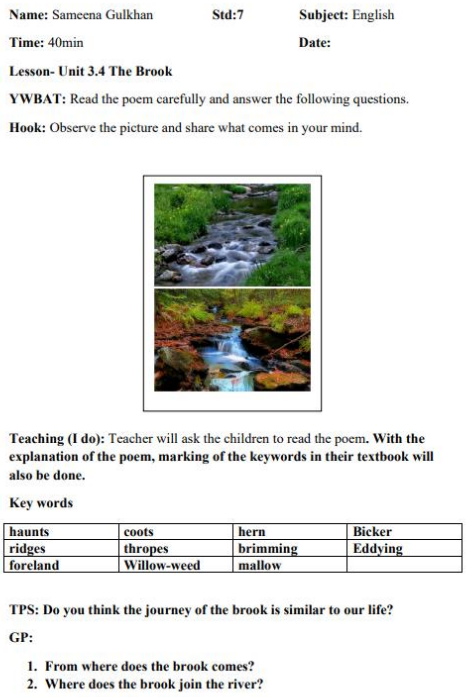
Peer learning has emerged as a powerful approach in professional development sessions for teachers, fostering collaboration, mutual support, and shared growth. Through the professional development sessions, the teachers gained practical insights, built confidence, and created a culture of continuous improvement within their schools. Educators from diverse backgrounds bring fresh perspectives and practical solutions

100%

Teachers stated that Group projects, digital storytelling, and collaborative assignments create a sense of camaraderie and excitement, encouraging students to be present for group activities.

Timely implementation of lesson plans

Additionally, the study also noted that teachers plan their lessons a week in advance and submit it to Akanksha Foundation for approval of the same. Once its verified and approved, the teachers implement the same in their classes. This activity is taken place weekly. It can be determined that efficient planning has ensured that technology and training are delivered for the lessons to have maximum impact on student learning. These synchronised schedules for training / professional development sessions for teachers help reduce disruptions to teaching time. **The activity of lesson planning and professional development sessions have also helped the teachers in making real time adjustments to improve program delivery.**



Name: Sameena Gulkhan **Std:7** **Subject:** English

Time: 40min **Date:**

Lesson- Unit 3.4 The Brook

YWBAT: Read the poem carefully and answer the following questions.

Hook: Observe the picture and share what comes in your mind.

Teaching (I do): Teacher will ask the children to read the poem. **With the explanation of the poem, marking of the keywords in their textbook will also be done.**

Key words

haunts	coots	hern	Bicker
ridges	thropes	brimming	Eddying
foreland	Willow-weed	mallow	

TPS: Do you think the journey of the brook is similar to our life?

GP:

1. **From where does the brook comes?**
2. **Where does the brook join the river?**

Lesson plan sample

Optimal technology deployment

The efficient distribution of iPads, tablets and Apple TVs in the schools have ensured that the right tools are delivered based on their needs and capacities. These devices are shared across classrooms to maximise utilization, reducing per student costs while maintaining equitable access.

d. Coherence

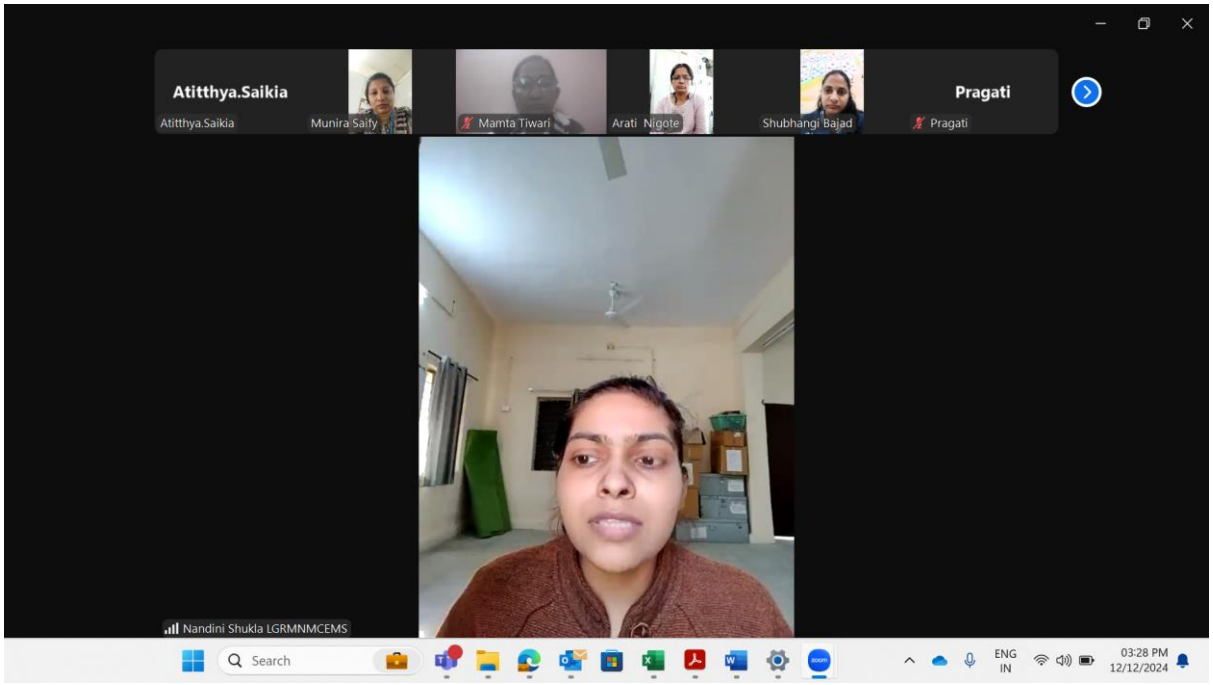
Alignment with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes equitable access to quality education, technological integration, skill development, and teacher capacity-building. A school support program that aligns with the NEP ensures its interventions are relevant, impactful, and sustainable while contributing to India's broader educational transformation goals.

NEP's area of focus	Program alignment
Bridging gaps in access to education for underserved communities.	✓ Ensures students from marginalized communities have equal opportunities to access high-quality education.
Leveraging technology to enhance learning outcomes, improve teacher training, and increase access to educational content.	✓ Provides digital tools (iPads, tablets) and establishes smart classrooms equipped with Apple TVs, fostering digital literacy among students.

NEP's area of focus	Program alignment
Continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers to improve pedagogical practices and adapt to technological advancements.	✓ Regular professional development sessions for teachers, focusing on integrating technology into their teaching methods.

Table 3: NEP's area of focus and program's alignment



Interaction with teachers from Nagpur schools

e. Impact

Improved student attendance

As per the interaction with the students, they use technology to create presentations, perform skits, or complete projects, which are showcased to their peers and community. The excitement of participating in such activities boosts their willingness to attend school consistently. Additionally, engaging parents through the program also fosters a collective commitment to ensuring children attend school.

100%

Teachers stated that Group projects, digital storytelling, and collaborative assignments create a sense of camaraderie and excitement, encouraging students to be present for group activities.

In the graph below, it can be ascertained that, in the initial year during the pandemic, the attendance rate of the students was low in almost all schools in Nagpur, Pune and Mumbai. **However, in the recent AY's the attendance has been between 80 – 92%. SMCMPS, Mumbai has the highest % of student attendance (92%), followed by BOPEMS, Pune (90%) in the recent year (AY 2023-24) while LAPMEMS, Pune has an attendance rate of 78%.**

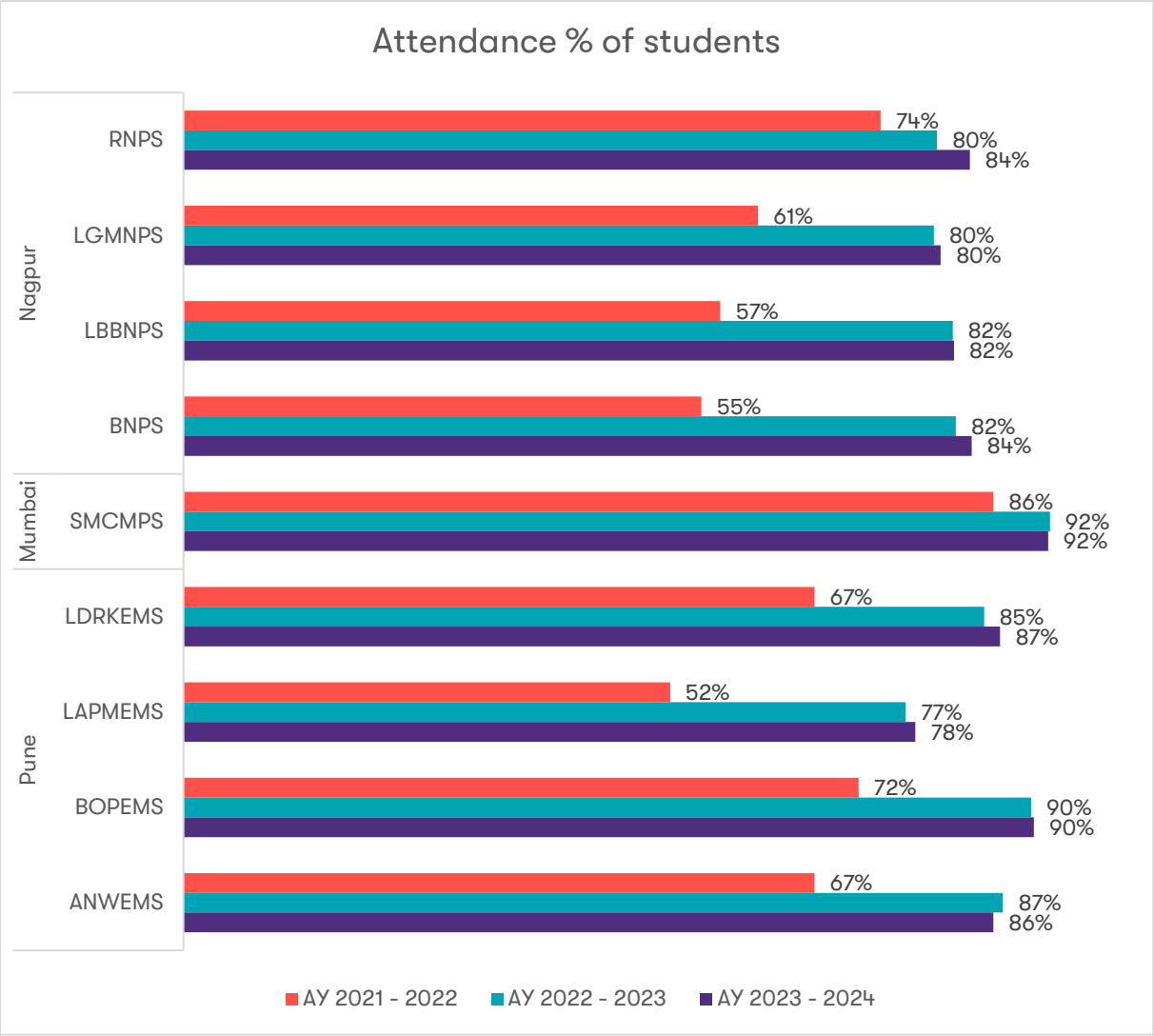


Figure 8: Attendance % of students

Improved graduating student outcomes[3]

As per the graph below, LAPMEMS in Pune had an overall 96% passing percentage of their SSC students in the beginning AY 2021 – 22, however in the following years witnessed an improvement to 100% students passing their 12th grade / Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams. On the other hand, SMCMPS, Mumbai have achieved 100% passing percentage from AY 2021 – 22 to AY 2023 – 24.

3 LAPMEMS, Pune and SMCMPS, Mumbai are the only schools in the program with grade 10.

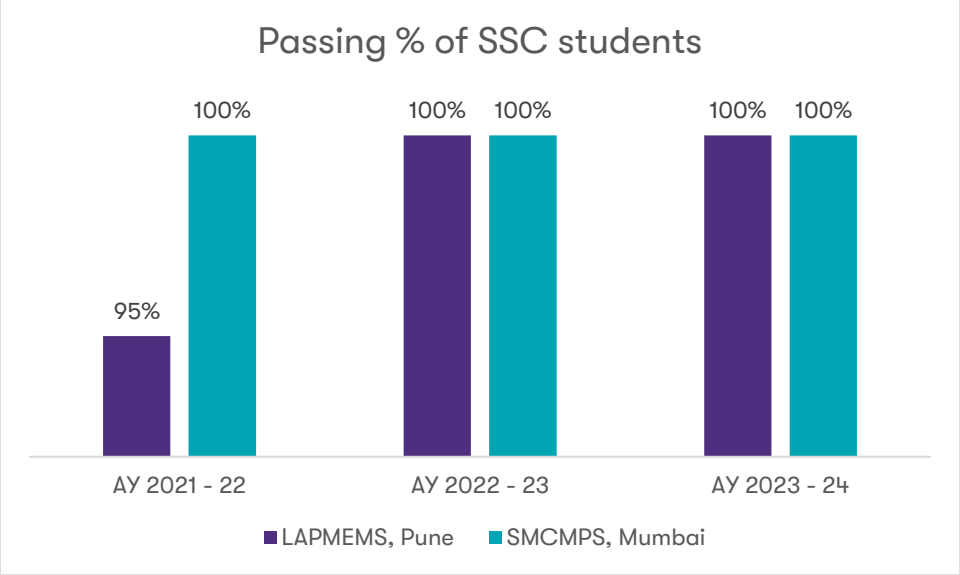


Figure 9: Passing % of SSC students

Student retention rate

In the graph below, it is determined that during AY 2021 – 22, there were less dropouts due to the pandemic as the classes were conducted virtually. However, during the recent year the retention rates have been reduced across all schools in Nagpur, Pune and Mumbai. During the discussion with teachers and relevant stakeholders, it was noted that Nagpur schools' children face difficulty in transitioning to English language as a medium in their classes hence leading to some students dropping out before completion of grade 3 (Nagpur schools have grades from Junior KG to Grade 3). Additionally, many parents voiced themselves about the commute to schools being longer and expensive and hence leading to the dropouts. Teachers also stated that due to RTE Act provisions, a significant number of parents prefer to transfer their children to the nearby CBSE schools with the presumption of better-quality education and facilities available as compared to the government schools.

Schools in Pune and Mumbai also face challenges such as collation and submission of government documents and IDs during the time of enrolment hence leading to dropouts if document submission criteria are not met. On the other hand, external factors like migration of parents to other cities also play a role in the dropouts of the children.

As per the graph below, the highest student retention rate in the last year is SMCMPS, Mumbai (98%) while the lowest is LBBNPS, Nagpur (84%).

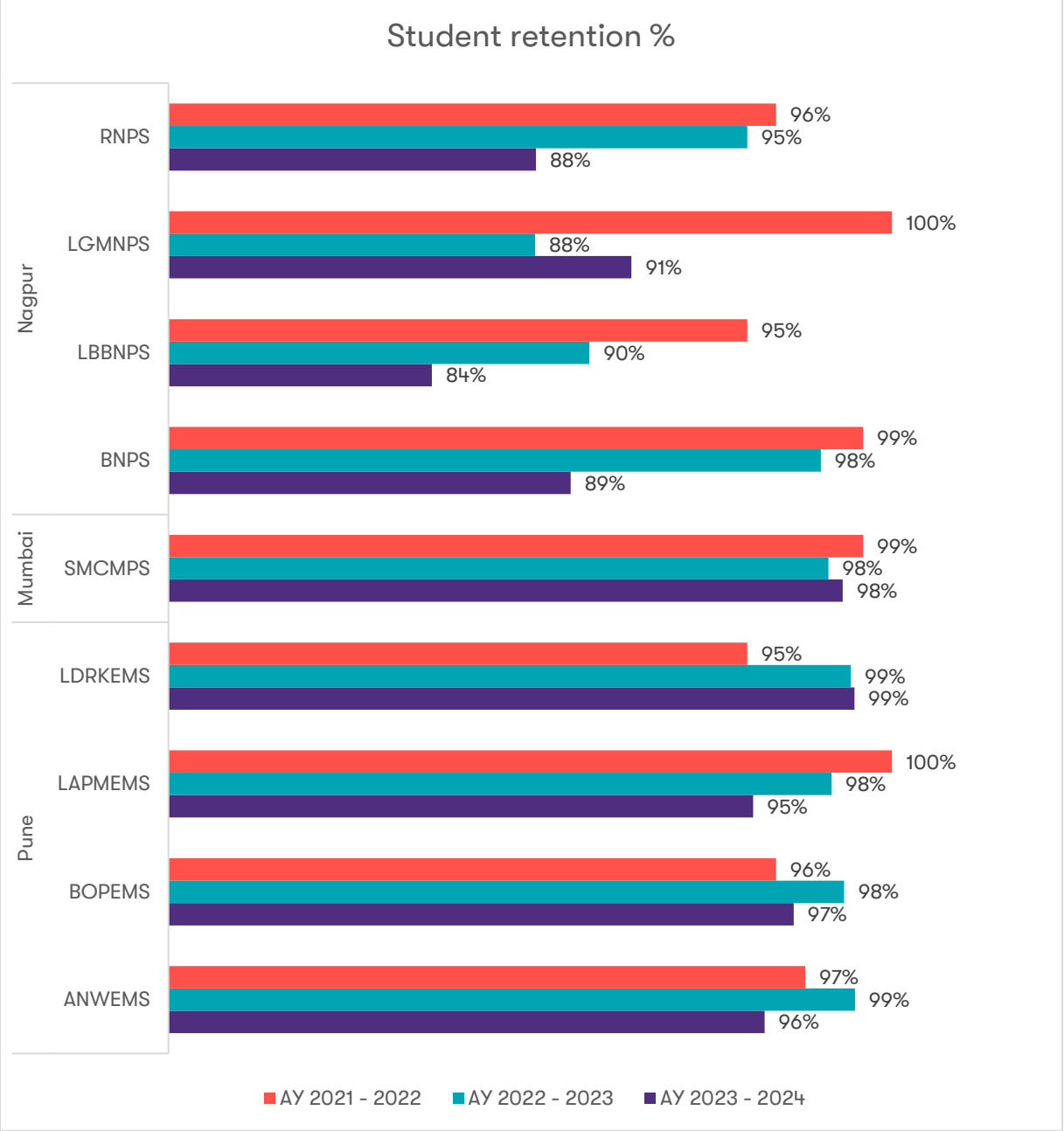


Figure 10: Student retention %

Teacher retention rate

Access to modern tools, technology, helped reduce the stress of working with inadequate resources, making teaching a more rewarding experience. This tangible support demonstrated respect for teachers' efforts and encouraged them to remain in their roles. By providing opportunities for continuous learning and skill development, the program empowered teachers to grow professionally. A well-trained teacher feels more confident and effective in their role, leading to greater job satisfaction and retention. Peer support systems, pairing experienced teachers with less experienced ones have helped the new teachers navigate challenges and fostered a sense of community.

However, in the graph below, across all locations, the retention rates have been reduced last year. **Highest retention rate is recorded in BNPS, Nagpur (91%), while the lowest is in**

LGMNPS, Nagpur (52%) and ANWEMS, Nagpur (59%). The interactions with the teachers determined that some teachers migrate to other schools seeking better compensation.

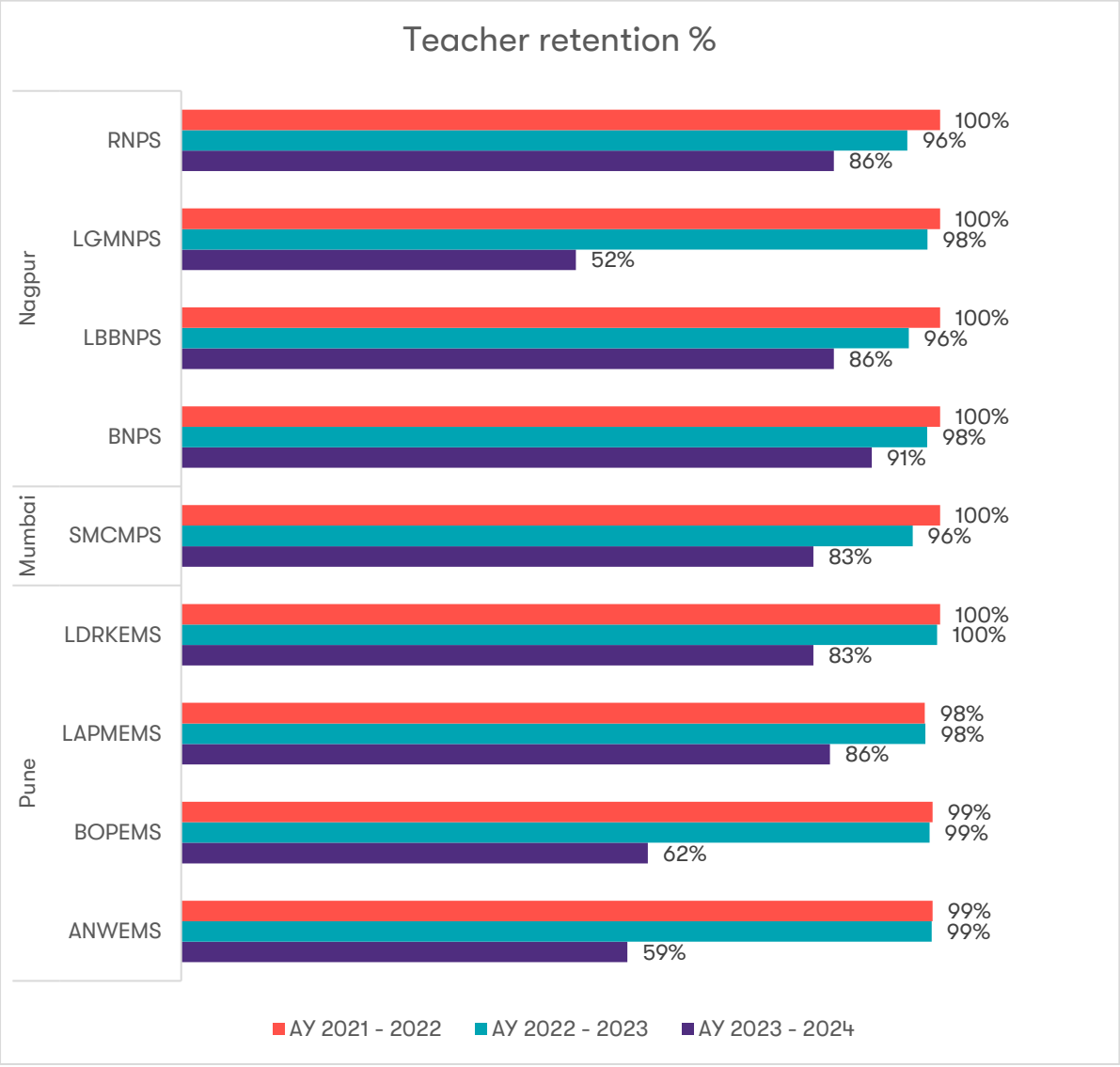


Figure 11: Teacher retention %

Parental engagement leading to digitally aware parents

A well-designed school support program plays a significant role in fostering parental engagement and encouraging their involvement in their children's education. By creating opportunities for collaboration, communication, and participation, the program has helped strengthen the partnership between schools and families, leading to better academic and social outcomes for students. The program has established robust communication systems, such as parent-teacher WhatsApp groups, and regular meetings, to keep parents informed about their children's academic progress and school activities.

Clear and frequent communication helped parents stay updated and more willing to engage with the school. By facilitating the establishment or strengthening of Parent-Teacher Associations, the program has provided parents with a platform to voice their

opinions, collaborate on school initiatives, and play an active role in decision-making processes. This involvement fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among parents.

100%

Parents stated that the program has helped transform their attitudes towards technology. Now they are using WhatsApp actively to track progress and stay informed about school activities.

The program emphasized creating a warm, inclusive atmosphere where parents feel comfortable interacting with teachers and staff. Events like informal meetups, and parent-teacher conferences, SMC meetings helped build trust and open lines of communication.

Interaction with parents in SMCMPS, Mumbai

In the graph below, it is noted that highest parental engagement in the past year was in SMCMPS, Mumbai (80%), while the lowest was in LDRKEMS, Pune (46%). The low engagement is attributed to the fact that most of the parents in Pune work in blue collar jobs, and the timings of parent teacher meetings often clash with their work hours.

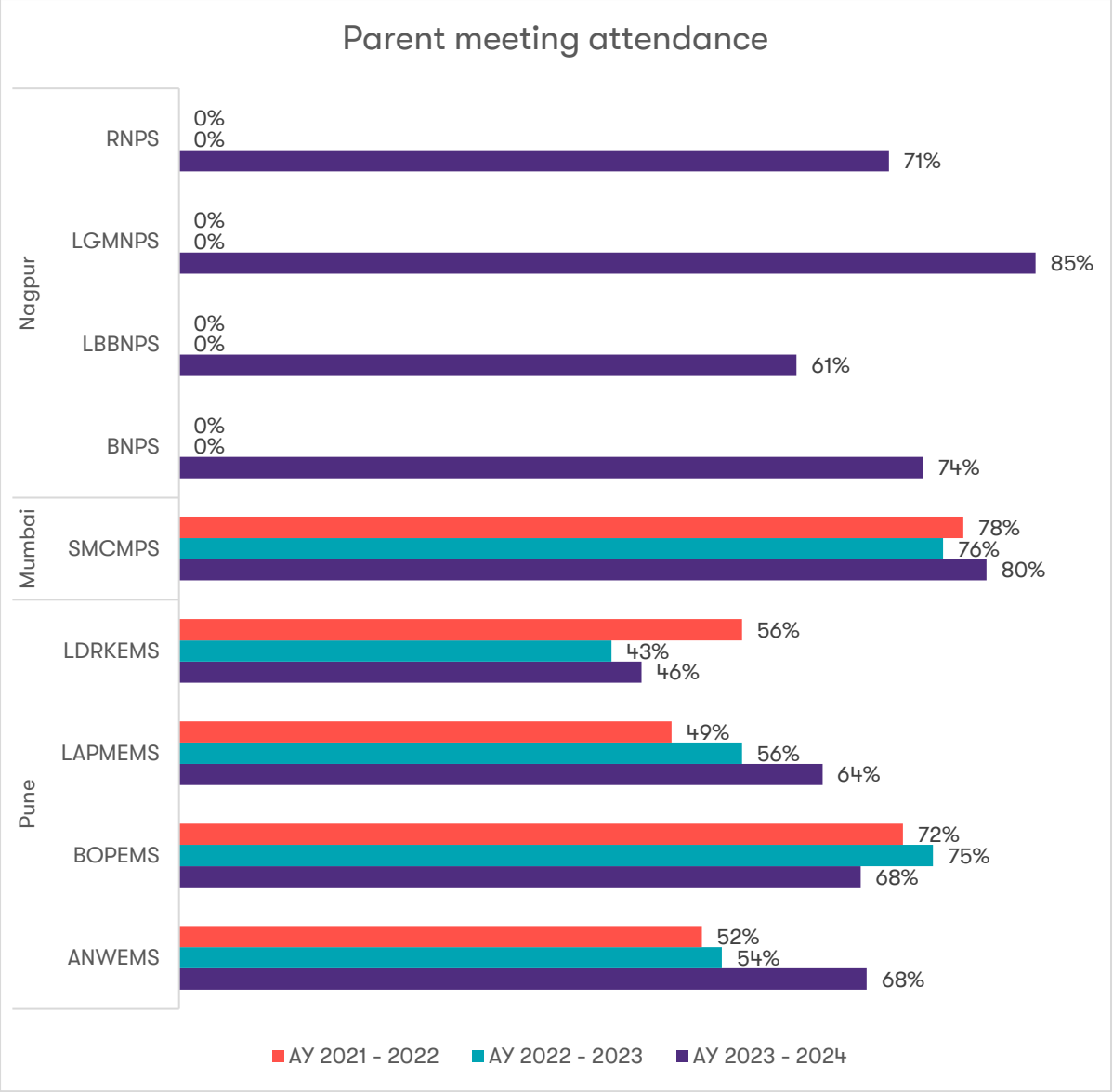


Figure 12: Parent meeting attendance

f. Sustainability

Enhancing student engagement and outcomes

With access to personalized resources, students have been able to strengthen their foundational skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, enabling students to revisit and master concepts they may have struggled with previously. Beyond academics as well, students have developed critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving skills that ultimately prepare them for higher education and workforce.

Akanksha Foundation also launched two programs, namely RISE and STEM. RISE nurtures high potential learners from underprivileged communities. The program supports 27 students from Apple supported schools by providing 5 – 8 extra hours of academic enrichment, mentorship, and exposure to diverse experiences. These opportunities help students tackle challenging tasks, develop critical thinking, and foster deeper learning. The program uses competitive assessments, student portfolios and self-reflections to measure growth. The program prepares high performing students to excel academically and take confident steps towards their future goals.

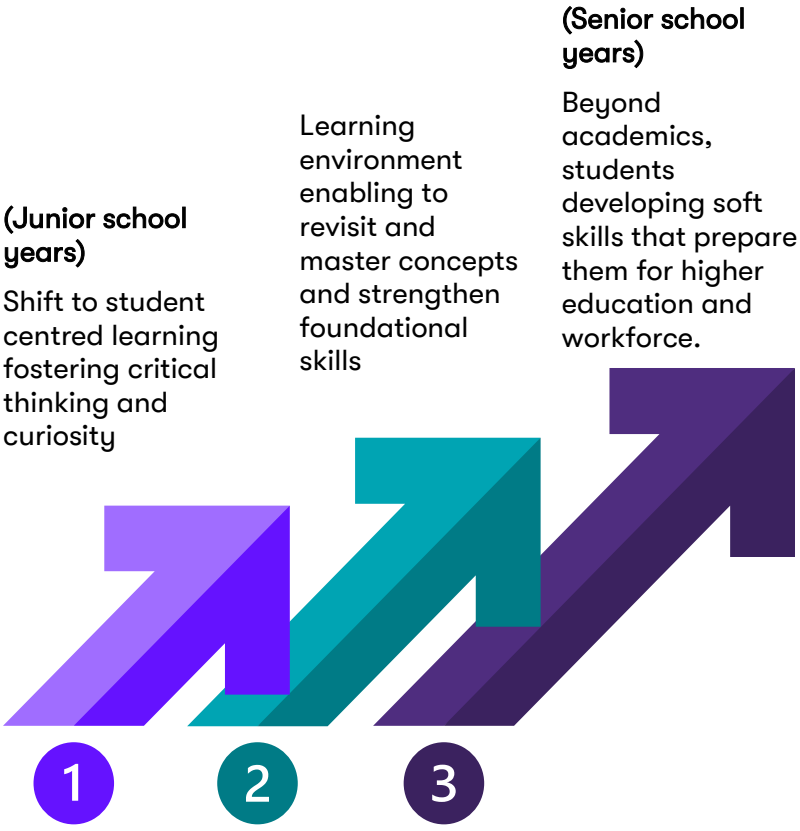
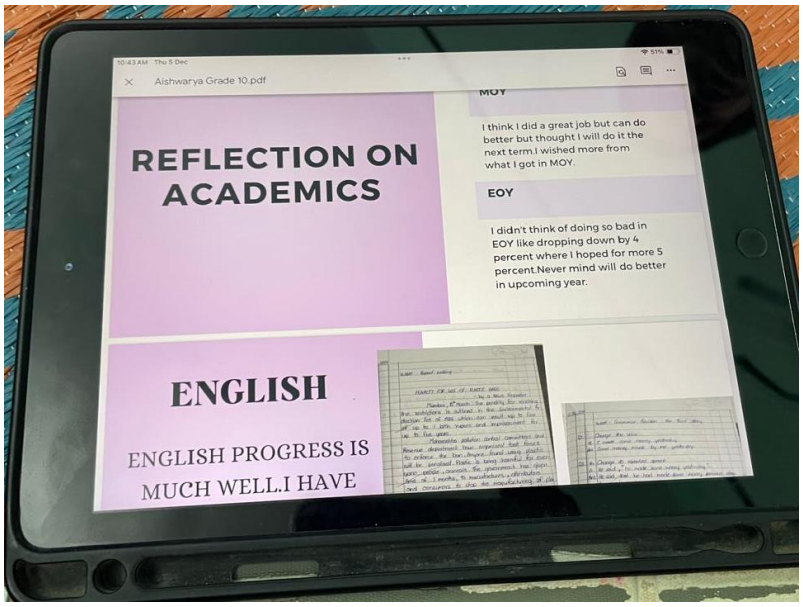


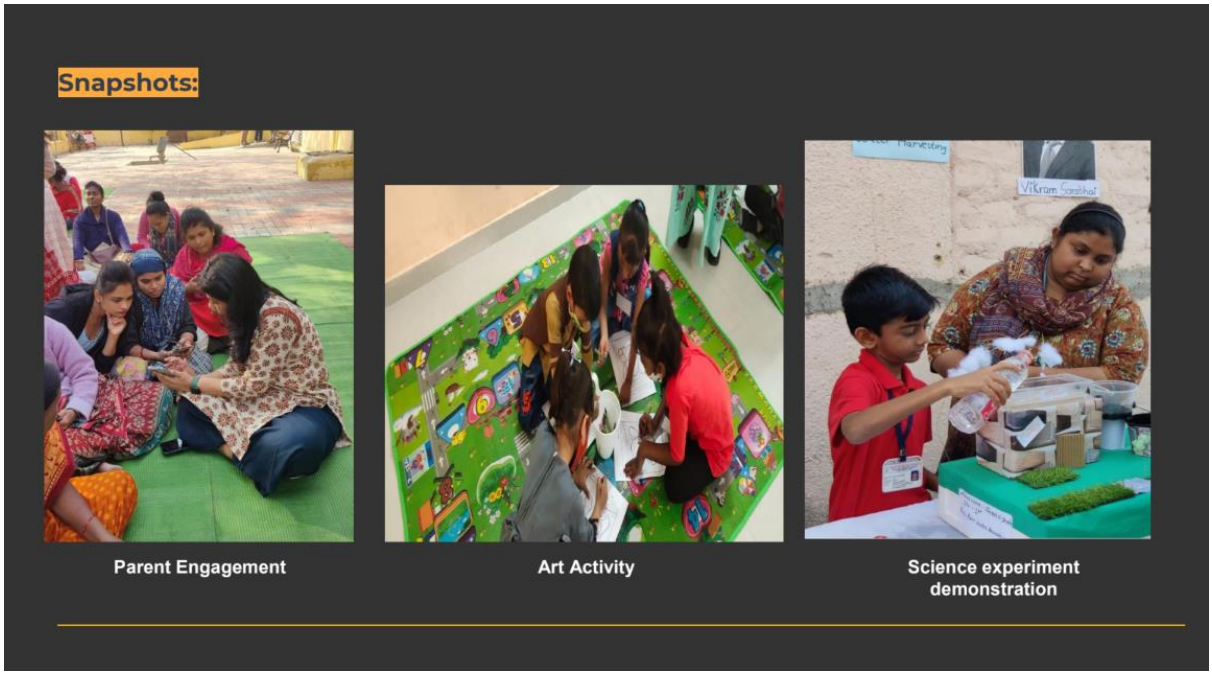
Figure 13: Enhanced student outcomes over the years



Student bio (assignment made by student)

Similarly, the STEM program supports 6 students from Apple supported schools aspiring careers in engineering and medicine. It provides rigorous coaching for NEET and JEE, weekly check ins, personalised mentoring, motivational talks, and tools.

It can be ascertained that due to development of soft skills such as critical thinking, confidence building has led these selected students to come forward and enrol themselves in programs such as RISE and STEM, thereby preparing high performing students for their career ahead of school years.



Snapshot of activities conducted in Q4 (Nagpur schools)

5. Improvements made so far

Revolutionizing career counselling through STEM

The program has transformed career counselling for graduating students by integrating a robust STEM component last year. This initiative has empowered students to explore diverse career pathways in a rapidly evolving job market, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in STEM fields while aligning their interests with emerging global opportunities. The integration of STEM into career counselling has had a profound impact on students' career readiness. Students feel more prepared to pursue competitive STEM programs in higher education and beyond. Students are more aware of the vast opportunities available in STEM, including emerging roles in fields like microbiology etc.

Digital literacy for students: A gateway for families

As schools integrate technology into teaching, students from underprivileged backgrounds are often among the first in their families to gain exposure to digital tools. Learning management systems, online research, and digital assignments equip students with critical skills they bring home. These skills spark a natural exchange, where students share their knowledge with parents, creating an entry point for families into the digital world. Over the years, it is evident that parents are more digitally aware now and involve themselves in digital platforms such as WhatsApp to keep themselves updated about the school activities.

Figure 14: Evolved parental engagement

Confidence beyond the classroom

Over the years, the program has successfully transformed students' confidence levels by integrating iPads and tablets into classroom learning and encouraging creative expression through assignments, presentations, and community skits. Regularly presenting their work in front of classmates helped them overcome stage fright, improve public speaking skills, and gain confidence in articulating their ideas. Performing in front of community audiences allowed students to step out of their comfort zones and

Transformative impact over the years among the students

- → **Improved self esteem**
- → **Public speaking skills**
- → **Sense of achievement**
- → **Community appreciation**

engage with a wider group of people. Applause and positive feedback from parents and community members reinforced their confidence and motivated them to take on more challenges.

“”

When I joined RISE program that focused on academic achievement and diverse experiences, I wasn't sure if I was ready for the challenges it would bring. But as I progressed through the program, I realized just how much my school's use of technology, particularly iPads, had prepared me to succeed. The skills I had unknowingly developed in school with the help of technology became the foundation for everything I achieved in this program. One of the most valuable skills I developed was creating and delivering presentations. My teachers often encouraged us to use iPads for class projects. Whether it was designing a slideshow in Keynote, editing videos in iMovie, or crafting infographics, I became adept at using digital tools to tell a story. Standing in front of my peers and presenting these projects made me more confident in my communication abilities. The program I enrolled in was designed to connect students with mentors in various fields, provide academic support, and offer diverse, real-world experiences. At first, I felt nervous about stepping out of my comfort zone, but I quickly realized that the tech skills I had learned in school gave me a significant head start. **The program relied heavily on digital platforms for communication, assignments, and virtual workshops. Because I was already familiar with tools like Google Workspace, Zoom, and Canva from my school experience, I could easily navigate these platforms. While some of my peers were still learning the basics, I was able to focus on the content and make the most of every opportunity.** My school empowered me with the tools and confidence to excel, and the mentorship program helped me take it to the next level. Together, these experiences have shaped who I am today, and I'm excited for what's to come.

- **Rani Sahu**
9th grade, SMCMPS, Mumbai

6. Conclusion and way forward

The impact assessment of the school support program reveals significant positive outcomes in both academic performance and overall student engagement, primarily driven by the integration of technology. The program's use of digital tools such as iPads, tablets, and educational apps has transformed the learning experience, fostering greater collaboration, personalized learning, and increased access to educational resources. Through the incorporation of technology, students have developed strong digital literacy skills, which are crucial for their future academic and professional success. Teachers have benefited from professional development opportunities that allowed them to better incorporate technology into their classrooms, enhancing teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. It has contributed to improving academic outcomes, student retention, and teacher effectiveness. Going forward, Apple India may also look at the following recommendation to make the program achieve maximum success.

Areas of improvement	Recommendation	Concerned schools
It was reported that many devices (iPads) need repair / change as they have been used since the inception of the program. Additionally, chargers of these devices have also stopped functioning.	Apple may look at implementing - a phased replacement plan (Replace devices in stages, prioritizing older models or those with persistent issues) Implement a Robust Maintenance Plan (Schedule device check-ups for software updates, hardware repairs, and cleaning)	SMCMPS, Mumbai
Teachers stated that creation of new apple IDs for new teachers and taking over the devices from the teachers who leave the schools often have challenges as they feel they are not adequately trained in the same.	Akanksha Foundation and Apple may look at streamlining the devices handover process to make it easier for the teachers to take over the devices when a teacher leaves the school.	All
It was noted that students in Nagpur schools face language barrier in their classes hence leading to scoring poor in their assessments and dropping out in some cases.	Apple may look at providing the teachers and students with devices such as tablets / iPads and encourage teachers to use improving language proficiency apps (Memrise or Quizlet) for students to adapt to English.	Nagpur schools
As per the findings, it was also determined that teacher retention was lowest in the past year across all schools.	To mitigate this challenge, implementing regular check ins, feedback mechanism, creating a culture of recognition as well as conducting exit interviews will help understanding the reasons for the problem better	All

7. Annexure

a. Abbreviations used

AY	Academic Year
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CPD	Continuous professional development
DLI	Digital Learning Initiative
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GTBL	Grant Thornton Bharat LLP
LLP	Limited Liability Partnership
NEP	National Education Policy
OECD DAC	The Organization for Economic Co-operation Development Development Assistance Committee
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RAZ	Reading A-Z
RTE	Right to Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEE	Social, Emotional, and Ethical
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

b. Caveats

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- The information collected for this study is through field visits, meeting with various stakeholders, information shared by respondents and backend data provided by the

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- Owing to communication gap and the inherent human instinct to report everything as above-expectations and glitch-free, it was challenging to make interviewees understand the purpose of the survey and ensure that correct data was accordingly gathered. In the absence of baseline data, responses for retrospective questions are based on the respondents' ability to recall past information.
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