IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT OF DIGITAL SHAALA PROJECT- NASHIK, MAHARASHTRA

September 2026

Pernod Ricard India Private Limited

Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP

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List of Acronyms

BoD	Board of Directors
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
IDI	In-depth Interviews
IRECS	Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence, Sustainability
KII	Key Informant Interview
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
PRIF	Pernod Ricard India Foundation
PRIPL	Pernod Ricard India Private Limited
PWCALLP	Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations

1. Executive Summary

Pernod Ricard India Private Limited (PRIPL) with the help of Muskaan Dreams Creative Foundation implemented the 'Digital Shaala' project in government schools of Dindori block, Nashik district, Maharashtra, as part of its CSR commitment to promote sustainable development. The project focused on three areas: (i) provision of access to digital learning devices by setting up digital classrooms in government schools, including SMART TVs/interactive flat panels, pen drives with preloaded offline content and Wi-Fi dongles to create a child-friendly learning environment; (ii) training of teachers on using digital classrooms and integrating digital pedagogical approaches into their teaching methods; and (iii) handholding support to teachers through fortnightly school visits and virtual support, along with sensitisation of stakeholders at school, block and district levels and engagement with government authorities to advocate digital education and inclusion.

PRIPL engaged Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP / PW) to assess the impact of the project interventions done during January 2023 - March 2024. PW adopted a mixed method approach comprising both quantitative and qualitative research. A quantitative survey was conducted with 293 students across 10 government schools in Dindori block, while qualitative interactions included 43 FGDs, SGDs and IDIs with students, teachers, principals, parents, the Block Development Officer, the implementing partner and the PRIPL team. Findings were organised using the IRECS framework (Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence, Sustainability). The project details and the approach adopted for carrying the impact assessment are illustrated below:

Implementing partner

Muskaan Dreams Creative Foundation

Project period

January 2023 to March 2024

Research method

Mixed method

Project budget

INR 0.99 crore

Sample size

293 students interviews and 43 key stakeholder interactions

Research framework

IRECS

Key findings from the impact assessment study:

Academic Outcomes and Attendance of Students

- The project addressed learning gaps through digital classrooms equipped with content for Science and Mathematics. Among surveyed students, 96% reported that their academic performance in STEM subjects had increased after learning through digital classrooms, and among them, 81% stated that audio-visual content helped them better understand complex topics.
- School attendance improved following the intervention. 92% of students now attend school for more than 20 days each month, compared with 86% before the intervention.
- Student engagement and recall improved. 79% of students reported better recall of concepts due to visualisation, 69% found digital classes useful for exam revision and 69% reported greater willingness to attend school.

- 97% of students expressed a preference for audio-visual techniques as their preferred method of learning in digital classrooms, reflecting a shift towards interactive learning.

Improvement in Infrastructure and Quality of Schools

- The provision of SMART TVs, pen drives with preloaded Science and Mathematics content in local language, Wi-Fi dongles and PRIPL branding established foundational digital infrastructure in government schools, providing long-term assets that schools can continue to use.
- The upgraded facilities narrowed the gap in learning experiences between government school students and their peers, and supported the development of foundational and digital competencies among students.
- Operational gaps were observed during the assessment. Some Smart TVs were non-functional or partially working, certain Wi-Fi dongles were missing or non-operational, and some schools did not receive pen drives or received corrupted or incomplete content, indicating the need for systematic inventory tracking and maintenance.

Improved Capacity of Teachers in Education Technology

- 80 teachers were trained on using digital classrooms and integrating digital pedagogical approaches into their teaching. Teachers reported actively using the digital classroom setup in their daily teaching.
- Teaching practices shifted from traditional to modern methods, particularly in Mathematics and Science, with teachers using internet resources, audio-visual aids, storytelling and practical demonstrations.
- Teachers reported improvements in IT proficiency, with many progressing from basic to intermediate levels or from intermediate to advanced levels, strengthening their ability to integrate technology into classroom teaching.
- A few teachers who had recently joined or were transferred had missed the training sessions, pointing to the need for recurring and recorded training support.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen support mechanisms for regular maintenance and timely repair of digital assets, including protocols for equipment checks, replacement and clear cost-sharing responsibilities between stakeholders, and implement simple monitoring systems such as asset registers and repair logs to track functionality and usage.
- Expand the number of digital classrooms per school and extend digital content to higher grades (9th–12th) and additional subjects, while providing recorded training sessions to support newly appointed or transferred teachers.
- Adopt a low-cost, high-utilisation model by supplementing preloaded content with freely available open-source educational resources such as DIKSHA and e-Pathshala, and establish continuous monitoring through usage registers and session logs.
- Formally integrate the project with existing government educational frameworks such as NEP 2020, DIKSHA and PM eVIDYA, and involve School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) as custodians of the digital infrastructure.

Comprehensive analyses, detailed findings & observations, recommendations, and testimonials are presented in the subsequent sections of this report.

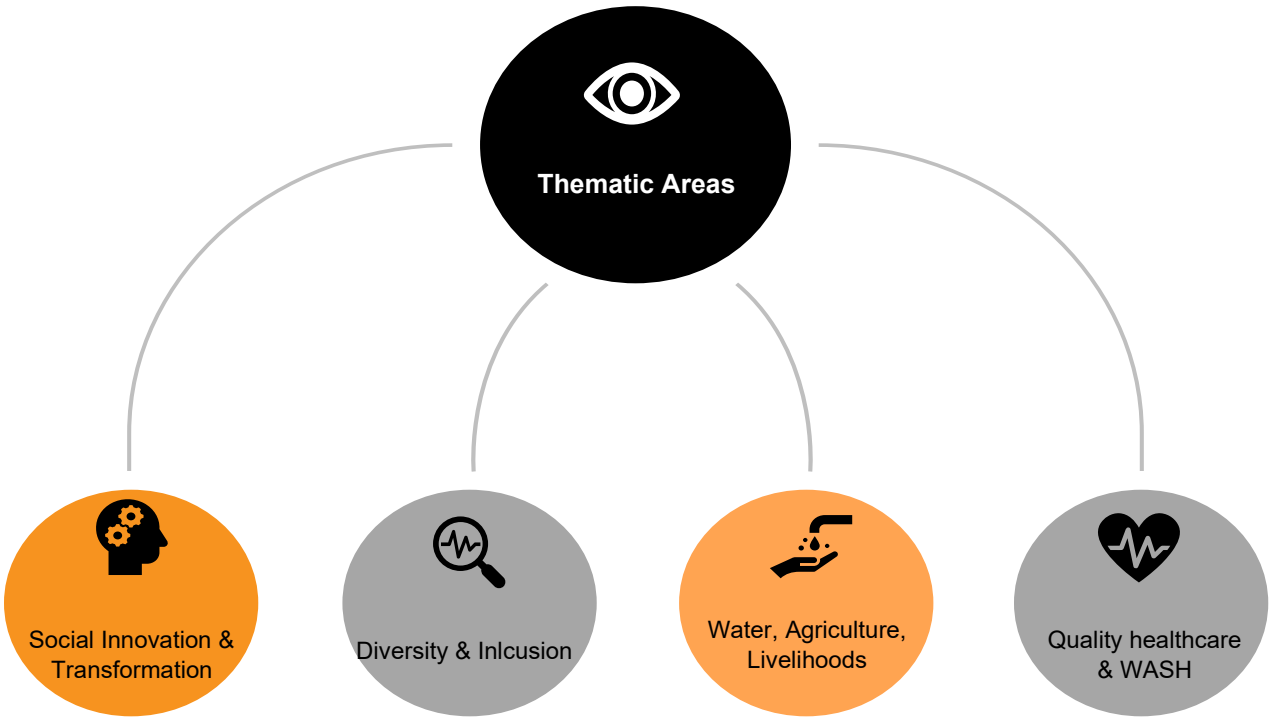
2. About PRIPL

Pernod Ricard India Private Limited (PRIPL), a multinational alcohol beverage company. As a wholly owned subsidiary of Pernod Ricard South Asia, PRIPL boasts over 30 years of heritage in India, with operations including a distillery in Nashik and 24 production sites nationwide.

PRIPL is dedicated to responsible business practices and community involvement through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Guided by PRIPL's CSR Policy, which aligns with Section 135 of The Companies Act 2013, these initiatives prioritize sustainable development and address the needs of marginalized and disadvantaged communities throughout its operational regions in India.

The Pernod Ricard India Foundation (PRIF), a Section 8 Company and a wholly owned subsidiary of PRIPL, leads the company's CSR endeavors. PRIF is committed to driving transformational growth and development in strategic program areas. PRIPL engages actively with stakeholders, such as government bodies and community members, to ensure meaningful CSR initiatives. Through sustained community engagement, PRIPL strives to enhance local development, strengthen communities, and ensure opportunities for everyone to prosper[1].

FIGURE 1: KEY THEMATIC AREAS OF PRIF



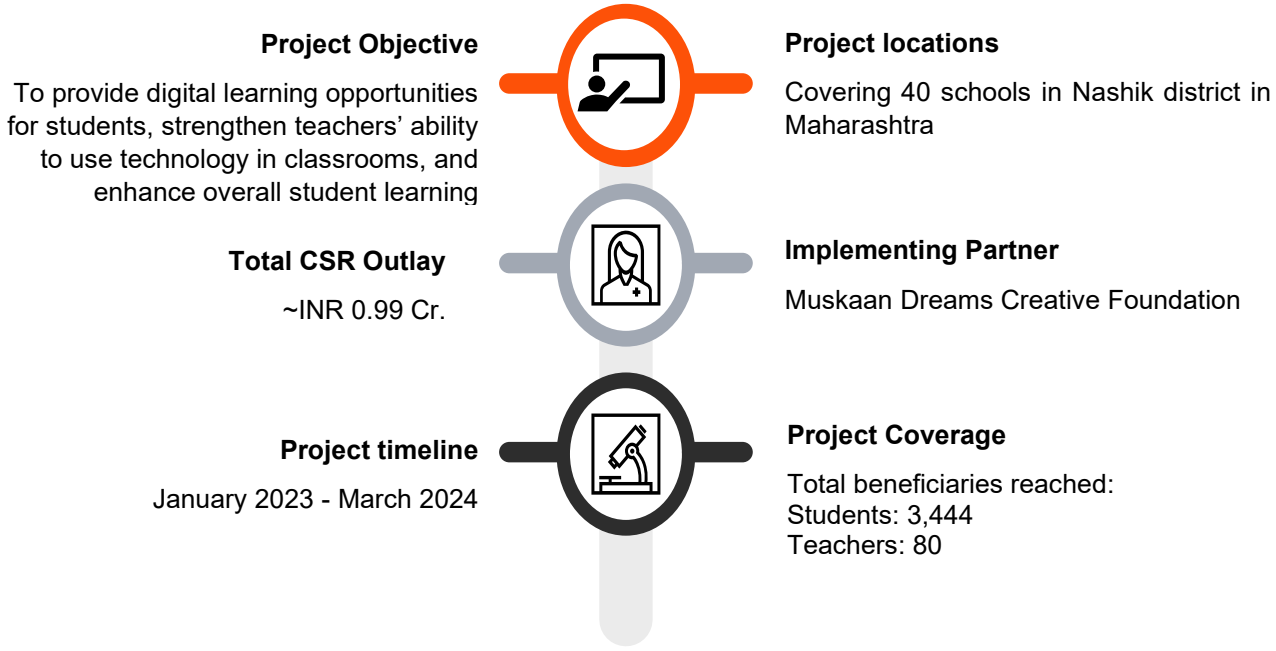
[1] Source: CSR program report 2023-24, Website

3. About the project

Digital Shaala is the flagship project designed by PRIPL for government schools to enhance students learning experiences, engagement, and academic outcomes. This project focuses on enabling blended teaching and learning for students in grades 6 to 8, integrating both academic and STEM education as outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP 2020)[2].

The project is aligned with NEP 2020, bringing technology and innovation into public school classrooms. Through this project, students gain the skills and confidence to excel in science and mathematics, while teachers are empowered with digital competencies that prepare them for the future. By fostering interactive and technology-driven classrooms, Digital Shaala creates a transformative impact on both teaching practices and student performance[3]. Below figure provides the project specifics [4]:

FIGURE 2: SNAPSHOT OF THE PROJECT UNDER ASSESSMENT



Key interventions carried out under the project:

1. Provision of **access to digital learning devices**, by setting up digital classrooms in government schools including SMART TV/ interactive flat panel, pen drive with preloaded offline content, and wi-fi dongle, complemented with attractive vinyl stickers to create a child-friendly and conducive learning environment.
2. **Training of teachers on using digital classrooms** and including digital learning pedagogical approaches in their teaching methods.
3. **Sensitisation of stakeholders at school and authorities** at block/ district level.
4. Provision of **support and handholding to teachers** during fortnight school visits, and swift virtual support through calls/ video calls, to address doubts and issues.

[2] Source: MoU between PRIPL and Muskaan Dreams

[3] Source: Project Documents shared by PRIPL and Implementing Partner

[4] Source: Project Documents shared by PRIPL and Implementing Partner

5. Engagement with district and state government authorities to advocate digital education and digital inclusion.

4. Method of Impact Assessment

PRIPL engaged PWCALLP to carry out the impact assessment of the **Digital Shaala Project** in **Nashik** with a purpose to evaluate the impact created during the project period of January 2023 to March 2024. The scope of work included reviewing the Key performance indicators (KPIs) as defined by the Management of the PRIPL under the framework for implementing the Project for the outputs, outcomes and impact of the Project. Team adopted the "Inclusiveness, Relevance, Efficiency, Convergence, and Sustainability Framework (the 'IRECS')" to provide management with recommendations on the Project's performance for their further evaluation and consideration.

The assessment was undertaken using quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the interventions undertaken under the CSR project in mutual discussion with PRIPL. The overall methodology adopted for conducting the impact assessment study is categorized into four stages as illustrated below:

Stage 1: Desk review

- Inception meeting was done with the PRIPL team to get a detailed understanding of the interventions.
- Built consensus on scope of work and understanding PRIPL expectations.
- Desk review of the project documents was conducted, including the MoU, project proposal form, progress report, and baseline study report.
- Based on the desk review and preliminary interactions with key stakeholders from PRIPL, mapping of project stakeholders was done in consultation with PRIPL team for interaction purpose.

Stage 2: Planning and tool preparation

- The data collection plan was finalised in consultation with the PRIPL team.
- Key indicators, research tools were also shared and finalised post incorporation of feedback from PRIPL team.
- Digitisation and translation of the developed tools in local language was undertaken.
- PRIPL team was then apprised about the data collection plan for the field visit.

Stage 3: Data collection & field visit

- The field team was trained on the data collection tools.
- The implementing partner (IP) mobilized stakeholders on the field.
- The field data collection process was initiated.
- Quantitative survey with project beneficiaries was undertaken to record their feedback.
- In-depth Interviews (IDIs) with students, teachers, principals, PRIPL Team and Block Official were conducted.
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students were undertaken to gauge their views on the project.

Stage 4: Data analysis and report writing

- Assimilated the key findings to better analyse the data.
- Prepared the draft of the impact assessment report to PRIPL team.
- Obtained and incorporated feedback received from PRIPL.
- Prepared and submitted final impact assessment report to PRIPL.

3.1. Sampling plan

The project's impact was evaluated using a mixed research methodology, which involved both qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain comprehensive insights. As part of the quantitative approach, a structured sampling plan was implemented, involving a **sample size of minimum 253 students which was estimated based on 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error** by considering the total number of beneficiaries covered under the project as the universe. The study, however, **covered 10 Govt. schools in Dindori block, Nashik which covers 293 students, to ensure the statistical representation of project geographies in the sample** and the findings and analysis presented in the following sections of the report are based on the responses from the 293 samples.

As a part of the qualitative assessment, the following interactions including In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), Small Group Discussion (SGD) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to ensure holistic feedback on the project activities from the stakeholders:

Table 1: Qualitative sampling plan

Stakeholder Name	Mode of interaction	No. of interaction
Students of class 8th to 10th	FGD	10
Teachers	SGD	20
School management team/ Principals	IDI	5
Parents	IDI	5
Block development officer	IDI	1
Implementing Partner	IDI	1
PRIPL Team	IDI	1
Total		**43**

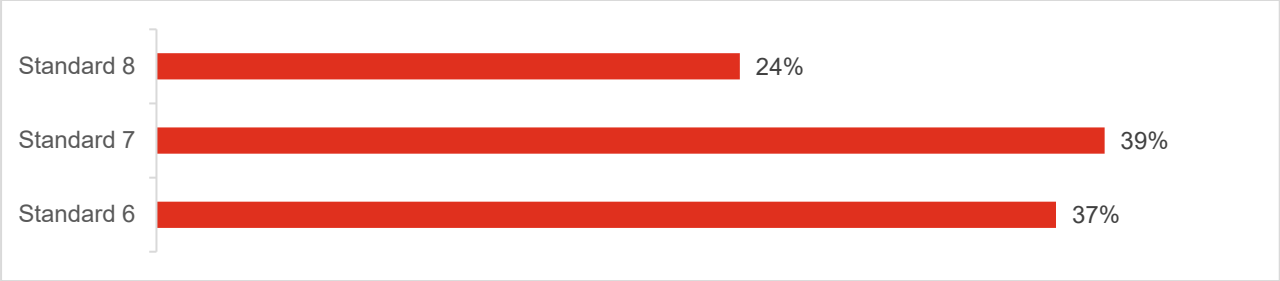
5. Key findings and analysis

This section of the report highlights the key findings and analysis on the impact created by the Digital Shaala project among the stakeholders in Dindori block of Nashik. The findings and analysis are based on the responses of 293 participants (N=293) of the quantitative study along with information gathered during the qualitative interactions with key stakeholders.

4.1. Profile of the respondents

- **Gender distribution:** 55% of respondents (n=293) identified as female and 45% as male.
- **Class Range:** A majority of the respondents (n=293), 39%, were from Standard 7, while 37% were from Standard 6, and 24% from Standard 8.

FIGURE 3: GRADE OF THE RESPONDENTS



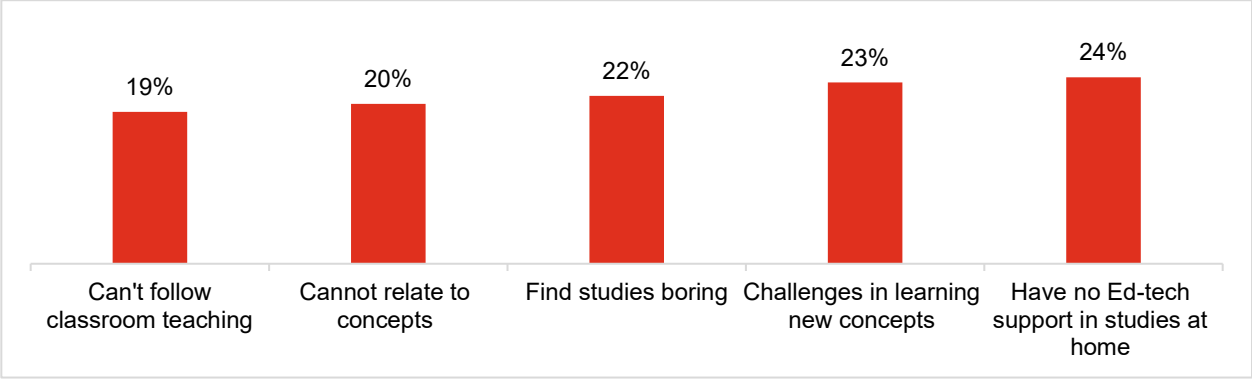
4.2. Need for the intervention

Prior to the implementation of the programme, both teachers and students faced a few key challenges in achieving the desired learning outcomes as listed below:

- Prior to the PRIPL intervention, digital tools were not available in the schools, which limited teachers' ability to use technology-aided methods in classrooms and restricted the quality of teaching to conventional approaches.
- The teachers mentioned facing challenges, such as limited access to modern technology, lack of resources for interactive teaching, difficulty in maintaining student engagement within the classroom, and issues with internet connectivity. These constraints made it difficult to deliver lessons effectively and to encourage meaningful participation by using traditional methods of teaching.
- The primary challenge faced by students in traditional classrooms is a 24% of students reported having no ed-tech support in studies at home, while 23% still face challenges in learning new concepts. Refer to figure 4 for more details.
- These findings suggest that low engagement and challenges in comprehending new concepts are the most prevalent issues among students in traditional learning environments.

During quantitative interactions, it was also confirmed by the respondents (n=293) that prior to the Digital Shaala setup they faced challenges in learning new concepts and had difficulty in visualizing concepts as demonstrated in the figure below:

Figure 4: Challenges in learning subjects without Digital Shaala intervention



Figures may not add up to 100% since this was a multiple-choice question

Importance of Digital class for Dindori, Nashik:

Introducing the Digital Shaala project at the government school level in Dindori, Nashik is essential for bridging the digital divide and equipping children with the technology-enabled learning experiences necessary for the future. Dindori, being a predominantly tribal rural area with hilly terrain and dispersed settlements, requires enhanced digital learning resources to prepare children in these remote regions for mainstream education and to bring them at par with their urban counterparts.

Early exposure to digital classrooms equipped with SMART TVs, reliable internet access, and curated video content in Science and Mathematics for standards 6–8 will help students develop visual understanding, conceptual clarity, and self-paced learning abilities from a young age. Integrating digital tools into school curricula can move education beyond traditional chalk-and-talk methods and rote memorization, encouraging interactive, audio-visual, and hands-on learning which are essential for stronger academic outcomes and future careers.

Additionally, access to digital learning resources helps bridge educational disparities, ensuring that students from underserved tribal and rural areas of Dindori gain the skills necessary to succeed in a technology-driven world while engaging with digital content from an early age. This early exposure increases the likelihood that they will continue pursuing higher education and confidently navigate technology in their professional careers, thereby contributing to local development and advancing equitable opportunities over time.

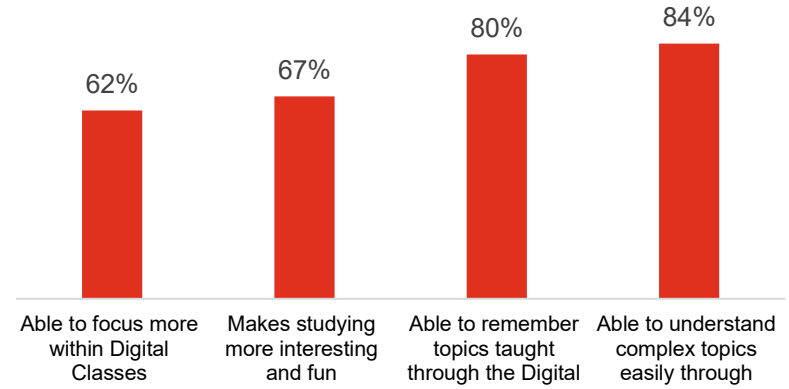
Furthermore, schools equipped with digital classrooms and trained, oriented teachers in Dindori, Nashik can help students understand and visualize complex concepts that were previously inaccessible due to limited resources, language barriers, or lack of qualified subject teachers. With Science and Mathematics content delivered in regional language, students can grasp difficult concepts in a language they are comfortable with, making learning more inclusive and effective.

4.3. Impact of the intervention

4.3.1. Improvement in Academic Outcomes and Attendance of the students

- **Increased academic performance:** The intervention has contributed meaningfully to enhancing students' academic performance, particularly in STEM subjects, as noted in both teacher observations and student responses. This was due to the Digital Classrooms being equipped with digital content for major subjects viz. Science and Mathematics. **96% of the students (n=293) said that their academic performance in STEM based subjects has increased** after learning through the Digital

Figure 5: Reasons for improvement in academic performance (n=282)



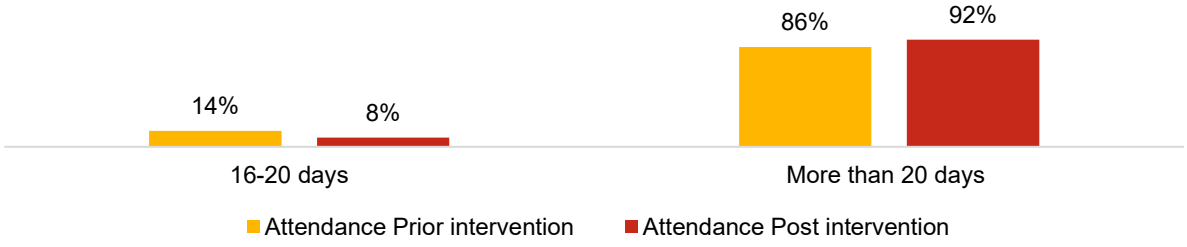
Multiple choice question, total may not add upto 100%

Classrooms. Among those who experienced academic improvement, 81% (n=282) stated that digital tools such as audio-visual content helped them better **understand complex topics.**

- **Improvement in attendance pattern:** While conducting the qualitative interactions with teachers, they mentioned that the **introduction of Digital Classrooms** in the school has **helped in improving the students attendance.** This is primarily because of **increased interest in learning through Digital Classrooms** and curiosity in learning audio-visual content through digital tools.

  Many of the students stated that they now look forward to attending school because of the engaging learning environment enabled by this project. Among the students surveyed (n=293), **92% stated that they are attending the schools for more than 20 days (as compared to 86% prior to intervention)** in a month after the Digital Classroom set up.

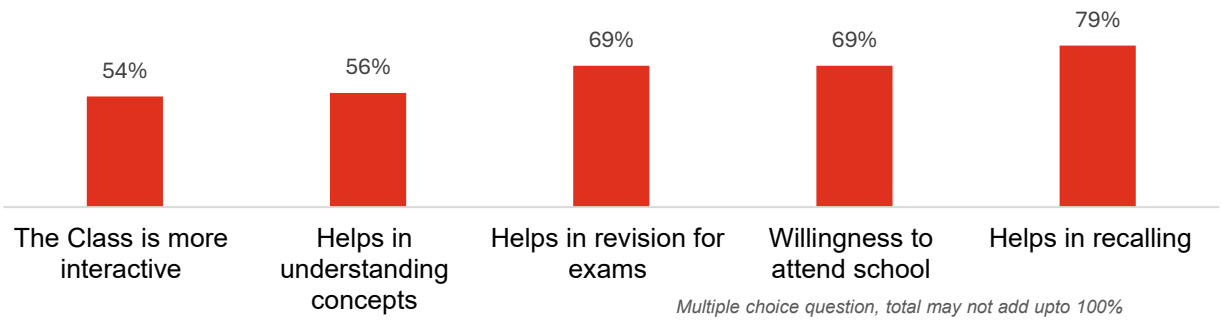
Figure 6: Average monthly attendance pattern of the students prior and post intervention (n=293)



- **Shift in learning preference of the students:** The feedback gathered through interviews and FGDs with students indicated a positive shift in their classroom experience after the introduction of Digital Classrooms. Students expressed that **learning through Digital Classrooms** was not only **easier** but also **more enjoyable.** The analysis indicates that:

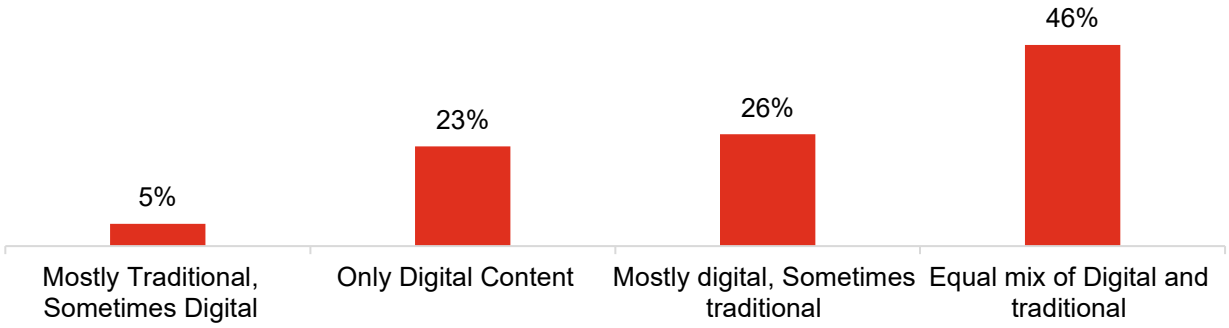
  - 79% of the students reported that this project **helped them recall concepts** better due to enhanced visualization.
  - 69% of the students indicated that digital classes assist them in revising for exams, and an equal percentage (69%) expressed increased willingness to attend school.
  - 54% felt that the classroom has become more interactive, and the same proportion noted improved understanding of concepts after the Digital Classroom installation. This demonstrates a shift towards engaging and effective learning environments facilitated by digital tools.

Figure 7: Advantages of learning in digital classroom (n=293)



- Post learning through the Digital Classrooms the learning preferences of the students have also shifted from the traditional method of learning to digital mode of learning. Figure 15 shows the learning preferences of the students.

Figure 8: Post-intervention learning preference of the students (n=293)



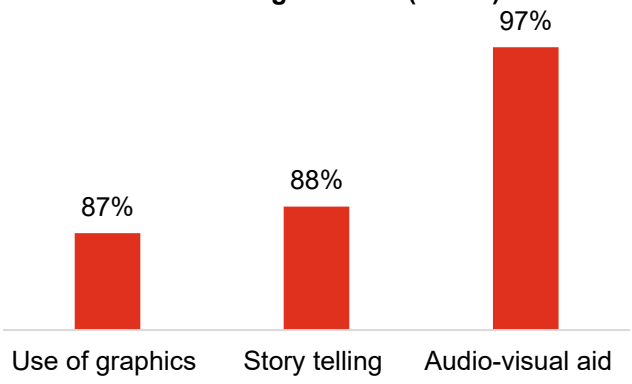
4.3.2. Improvement in infrastructure and quality of schools

- **Ensuring continuity of earning through digital content:** The availability of digital content has empowered substitute teachers to manage lessons more effectively, which is particularly valuable in government schools that often face teacher shortages during local elections. Principals further emphasized that student learning remains uninterrupted even when regular teachers are assigned administrative duties. Substitute teachers can easily access digital content, ensuring that classes continue with proper discipline. This is further supported by the fact that 97% of students reported that audio-visual aids help them learn, along with 88% who found storytelling effective and 87% who benefited from the use of graphics, indicating that students remain attentive and engaged through digital content-driven learning.

  Moreover, with the support of digital interventions, many students have shown improved performance in examinations. They also expressed that learning has become more enjoyable, easier, and engaging, motivating them to attend school regularly. However, certain gaps were observed towards digital content stored in Pen Drives provided by Muskaan Dreams to Govt. schools in Dindori Block, Nashik.

  - 3 out of 10 schools visited reported non-receipt of pen drives, which hindered the intended access to digital learning materials and affected the overall digital classroom experience.
  - Several pen drives provided to the schools were found to be corrupted or contained incomplete/missing files, rendering them unusable and limiting their effectiveness as learning aids.
  - The lack of systematic tracking and inventory mechanism led to frequent misplacement or loss of pen drives, resulting in inconsistency in digital content availability across schools.
  - These operational gaps in pen drive distribution and maintenance negatively impacted students' exposure to digital content, reducing opportunities for enhanced engagement and concept clarity.

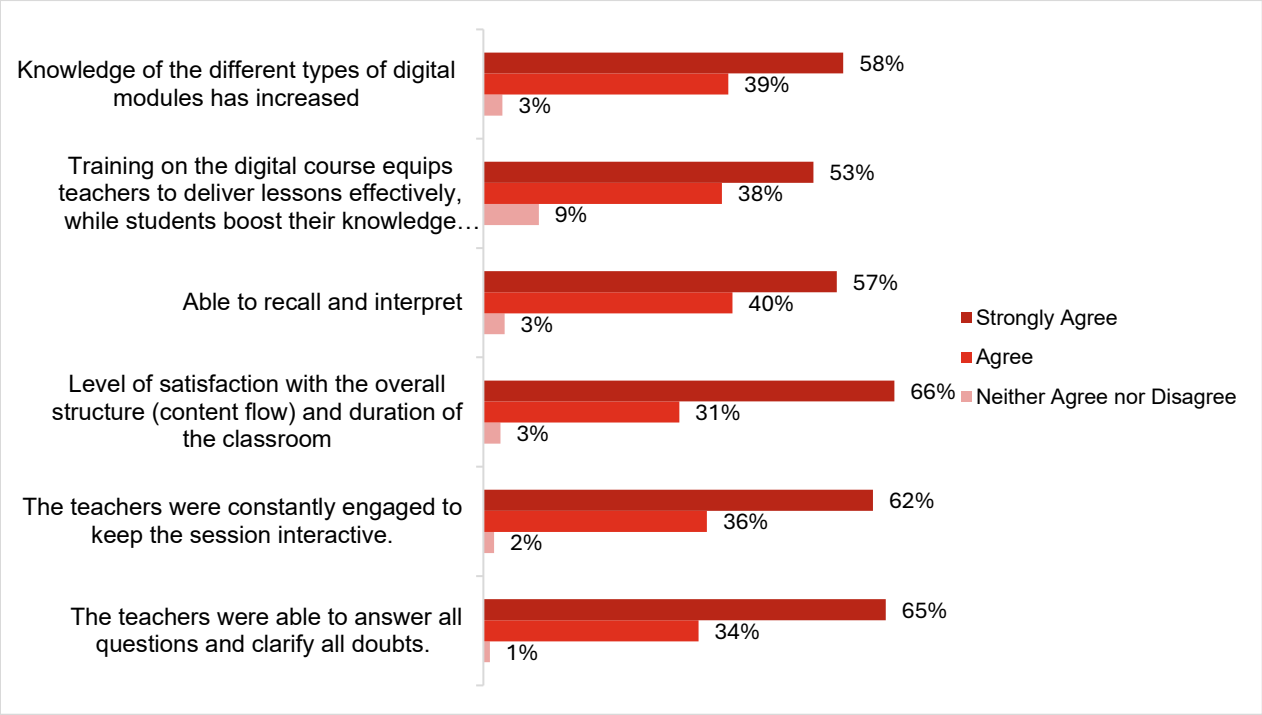
Figure 9: Use of method for teaching students in digital class (n=293)



Multiple choice question, total may not add upto 100%

- The absence of timely replacement or repair for damaged pen drives showed weaknesses in ongoing support and resource sustainability, undermining the long-term goals of digital intervention.

Figure 10: Agree/ Disagree statements of students class (n=293)



- The implementing partner reported that both **teachers and parents provided positive feedback on the integration of digital tools**, affirming the relevance and usefulness of the intervention. However, it was noted that the **availability of only two Digital Classrooms per school limited access for all classes**. Consequently, teachers recommended expanding the initiative to include multiple Digital Classrooms in each school and extending digital content to higher grades (9 - 12) as well as to additional subjects beyond Mathematics and Science, to ensure continuity of learning.

- **Key Concerns Regarding Digital Infrastructure Usage:** While the introduction of digital infrastructure has the potential to enhance teaching and learning, several key concerns related to the utilization and maintenance of these resources were observed in the schools. These issues have impacted on the effectiveness and continuity of digital learning, highlighting areas that require focused attention to ensure sustainable integration of technology in classrooms.

    - Out of 20 smart TVs provided in 10 schools, 5 smart TVs were found to be non-functional or partially working during field visits, limiting the delivery of digital lessons and multimedia content.

    - Wi-Fi dongles or internet connectivity devices frequently faced issues such as being non-operational, stolen, missing, or not returned to the schools from IP, disrupting consistent access to online digital resources.

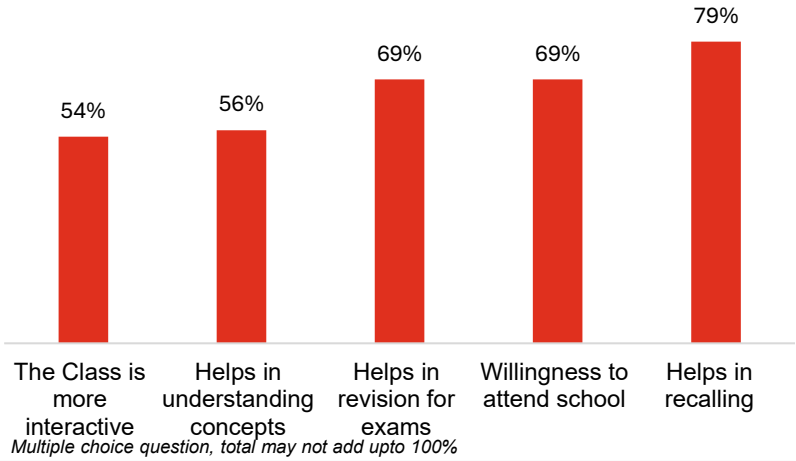
    - The lack of regular maintenance (such as Annual Maintenance Cost) and technical support for smart TVs and Wi-Fi equipment contributed to prolonged downtime, adversely affecting the quality and continuity of digital learning sessions.

- In several schools, the absence or intermittent availability of reliable internet connectivity restricted teachers' ability to use digital tools effectively, curtailing the potential benefits of the Digital Shaala program.

- **Improved Education Quality and Increased Community Trust:** Teachers shared encouraging feedback, noting that the enhanced infrastructure has contributed to a rise in student enrolment and retention. During parent–teacher meetings, it was observed that parents now express greater confidence in the quality of education being delivered.

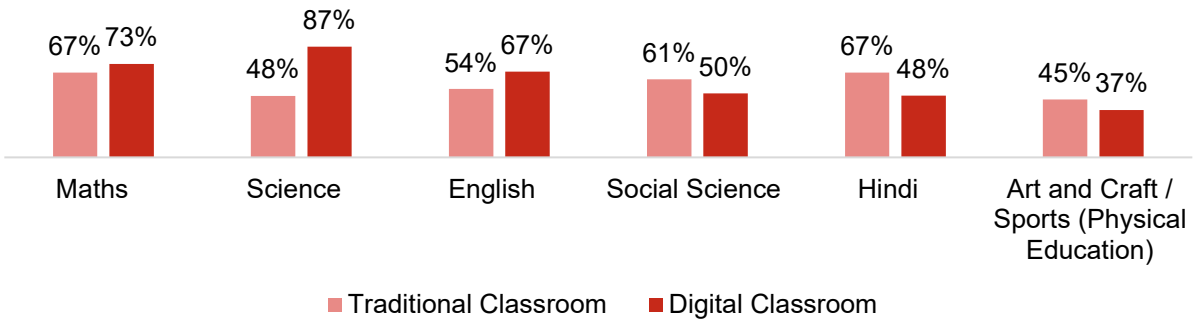
  The upgraded facilities have made government schools more competitive, narrowing the gap in learning experiences compared to their peers. This intervention has not only reinforced students' foundational skills but also equipped them with essential digital competencies, preparing them for future opportunities.

Figure 11: Impact on students after learning from the Digital Classes (n=293)



Multiple choice question, total may not add upto 100%

Figure 12: Subject -wise students' learning preference - Digital Classroom vs Traditional Classroom (n=293)



Multiple choice question, total may not add upto 100%

4.3.3. Improved Capacity of the Teachers in Education Technology

Professional development training under this project equipped teachers to effectively use Digital Classrooms and integrate digital tools into their teaching practice, addressing challenges in achieving desired learning outcomes.

In qualitative interactions with teachers, most reported having received formal training, while a few who had recently joined or transferred had missed the sessions. Despite this, teachers confirmed actively using the Digital Classroom setup in their daily teaching. They acknowledged the advantages of interactive digital pedagogy and demonstrated strong engagement with the training.

- **Transformed teaching methods:** During qualitative interactions, teachers highlighted that the training sessions had transformed their teaching methods, especially in **Mathematics and Science**. They explained that access to digital learning materials, interactive sessions, and new IT skills made lessons more engaging and allowed them to clarify complex concepts such as mathematical problem-solving and scientific theories more effectively. This reflects how the training has upskilled teachers, equipping them with the tools to seamlessly integrate digital methods into everyday classroom practice. Teachers are actively conducting digital classes, successfully using digital tools to enhance their teaching.

  Additionally, students also affirmed that their teachers now excel in leveraging digital tools within the classroom ranging from **audio-visual content and images to practical demonstrations, storyboards, and YouTube videos** making lessons more engaging, dynamic, and easier to comprehend.

Figure 13: PRIPL - Digital Classroom setup



- **Shift from Traditional to Modern Methods of Teaching:** Following the qualitative intervention, a major transformation in teaching practices was evident. The teachers reported that Digital Classrooms are more convenient than traditional methods and expressed a desire for more such classrooms in their schools. It was further noted that:

  - The intervention has driven a clear shift from traditional to modern teaching practices, especially in **Mathematics and Science**. Teachers now actively use **PRIPL** - supported digital tools in classrooms, which has helped students better understand complex topics and increased engagement. Students confirmed these improvements, noting greater clarity in Digital Classroom lessons. Teachers also highlighted **innovative practices, such as using YouTube for English instruction, reflecting the broader adoption of diverse digital resources to enrich teaching and learning.**

  - During interactions, the school Principal has shared that before the introduction of Digital Classrooms, the traditional teaching methods were time-consuming and often required them to draw complex diagrams on the blackboard, which did not effectively represent the concepts.

- **Improved IT proficiency:** The intervention enhanced teachers' digital skills. All teachers reported improvements in their IT proficiency, with many progressing from **basic to intermediate** levels or from **intermediate to advanced**. This advancement strengthened their digital competencies and enabled them to integrate technology more effectively into classroom teaching. The teachers emphasized that the skill enhancement from the various aspects of the training has been helpful for them in **improving their teaching** and **communication with the students.**

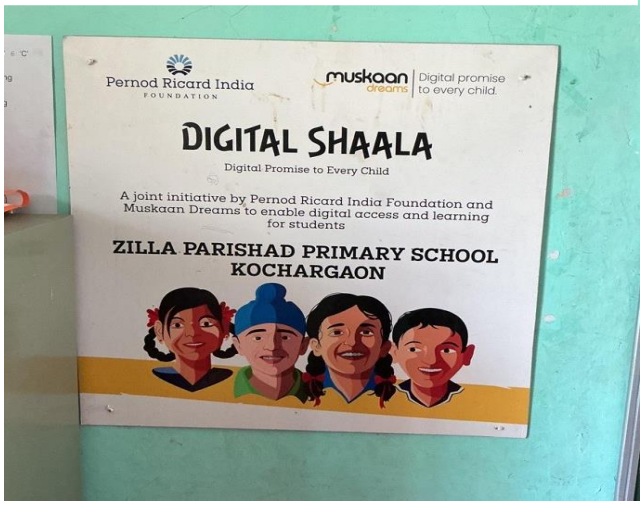
- Following the **PRIPL** intervention, teachers agreed that Digital Classroom learning is **highly effective in capturing students' attention**, as the training enabled them to make lessons more interactive. Students also confirmed this shift, noting that classrooms have become more engaging, enjoyable, and stimulating since the intervention.

- During discussions with the newly appointed Block Education Officer (BEO) at Dindori Block, Nashik, it was emphasized that regular monitoring is carried out in government schools, and teachers are effectively utilizing digital tools with active student engagement. However, valuable insights were limited due to the BEO's recent appointment and limited familiarity with the intervention. Principals also highlighted positive outcomes, noting improved attendance records and an increase in new admissions following the introduction of digital classrooms.

Figure 14: PRIPL – Wi-Fi Dongle support



Figure 15: PRIPL – Branding Digital Shaala project



6. IRECS Analysis

Basis the interactions with the key stakeholders and desk review, the impact of the project was also assessed on the IRECS framework parameters. The IRECS analysis summary has been presented on the table below:

Parameter	Assessment from Study
Inclusiveness	• The programme targeted all the students in Grades 6th – 8th in 40 government schools in Nashik, Maharashtra and support provided under the project reached out to all intended beneficiaries, irrespective of their **social class**. • The program reached all students in Grades 6 to 8 in government schools in Dindori Block, about 40-50 kilometers from Nashik city. It made sure that children from different backgrounds, especially those in this rural area, had fair access to digital learning tools and updated teaching methods. The project helped remove barriers so that every student could take part and learn better, helping to reduce differences in education quality. • The intervention prioritized inclusivity by targeting children from **underserved communities** so that they have **equal access** to updated learning methods as their peers.
Relevance	• The intervention is aligned with the specific needs of the government schools by addressing gaps in digital infrastructure and enabling access to quality STEM education. Its relevance is reflected in student-reported outcomes, with

Parameter	Assessment from Study
	96% of students (n=293) noting **improved academic performance** in STEM subjects through the Digital Classrooms, and **81%** (n=282) attributing this to digital tools such as audio-visual content that aided their **understanding of complex topics**. • The intervention addressed existing learning gaps in the targeted government schools by introducing context-appropriate digital tools and learning content, making it responsive to on-ground challenges. Its relevance is further reflected in students' learning experience and engagement, with **79% (n=293) reporting improved recall of concepts through enhanced visualization**, **69% (n=293) finding digital classes useful for exam revision**, and an equal **69% (n=293) expressing greater willingness to attend school**. • Baseline data further underlined the need for targeted academic support as many students were performing below proficiency levels, highlighting gaps that the intervention aimed to bridge. Variation in performance across schools emphasized the requirement for equitable resource allocation and tailored teaching strategies to ensure consistent learning outcomes. • Continuous monitoring through baseline and follow-up assessments emphasized the importance of sustained efforts to achieve measurable improvements in classroom proficiency and overall educational quality, validating the ongoing relevance of the intervention.
Effectiveness	• **92% of students** now attend school for more than 20 days each month following the project intervention. • **97% of students** expressed a preference for audio-visual techniques as their preferred method of learning in digital classrooms. • The intervention improved **access to Education technology** for all students leading to betterment in academic performance and attendance patterns. • For **most students**, digital classes and digital content made **learning easier and more interesting**. They reported **performing better in exams**, **finding studies more enjoyable**, and **experiencing a more engaging and interactive classroom environment**. • **The hands-on training received by the teachers from IP team** has proved effective in improving their confidence and helped them to integrate technology into their pedagogy. • There has been an **increase in classroom participation and attentiveness of the students** post intervention. This is attributed to the change in teaching pedagogy from traditional to modern.
Convergence	• The **Block Education Officer (BEO)** was consulted during the **selection of schools for implementing Digital Shaala project**. The government schools were chosen on the basis of the need and readiness for taking ownership of the Digital classes.

Parameter	Assessment from Study
	• The initiative has effectively complemented the efforts of the education department and government schools in the region. By aligning with the government's goal to promote digital learning, the intervention has contributed to elevating learning outcomes among students and strengthened teachers' capacity to adopt modern teaching methods. • The Digital Shaala project also supports the goals of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020,** which emphasizes **visualized** and **practical learning** for students. By setting up Digital class in schools, the project brings NEP 2020's vision into practice, enhancing digital literacy and critical thinking among students.
Sustainability	• By training teachers and **enhancing their IT skills from basic to intermediate or intermediate to advanced levels,** it has ensured that the use of the digital infrastructure would continue beyond the project period (after the exit of PRIPL and implementing partner). • Post the intervention, majority of the teachers **reported using internet to explain difficult topics, using digital classroom for storytelling purposes, using audio-visual aids** while teachers gave group assignments and practical demonstrations to students. This is a noticeable shift in the teaching methods and continue to sustain even after the closure of project. • Investments in Digital classrooms has provided **long-term assets that schools can continue to use**. • The **sustainability of the initiative is dependent on the continued maintenance of equipment and periodic training for teachers** to support effective use of digital tools over time. However, there is currently limited clarity on how the schools will ensure ongoing maintenance, which may affect long-term continuity of the intervention. • Going forward, regular maintenance, including allocation for **Annual Maintenance Costs**, along with timely technical support for smart TVs and Wi-Fi equipment, should be built as a part of the project design which will be essential to ensure smooth functioning and uninterrupted delivery of high-quality digital learning sessions.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on valuable insights shared by students, teachers, principals, PRI representatives and government stakeholders along with our own understanding of the sector:

1. Assessment of Capex Support Provided by Muskaan Dreams to Government Schools in Nashik

Findings indicate that Muskaan Dreams has established foundational digital infrastructure in Government Schools in Nashik through the provision of TVs, Wi-Fi dongles, and pen drives containing educational content, enabling the shift towards Digital Classrooms. While many schools have functioning assets that support digital learning, challenges such as equipment malfunction, missing or corrupted pen drives, and inconsistent branding have emerged, underscoring the fragility of sustained digital engagement.

- Support mechanisms should be strengthened to ensure regular maintenance and timely repair of digital assets, including protocols for equipment checks, replacement, and clear responsibilities for cost-sharing between stakeholders.
- Implement simple monitoring systems to track functionality and usage of digital infrastructure, enabling proactive interventions to minimise downtime.
- Encourage collaborative management within schools and across districts to share best practices around asset handling, digital content usage, and troubleshooting, fostering a community of practice among educators and administrators.
- Align digital infrastructure maintenance and capacity building with ongoing educational schemes and government programs to leverage public funding for major repairs or expansions, while promoting community and school-based contributions for routine upkeep.

These steps can help transition capex support from a one-time asset provision to a sustainable and scalable digital learning ecosystem in Nashik government schools.

Besides the above recommendation, following can be considered for further improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the project (or similar projects) in future:

2. Scale the Digital Classroom Infrastructure

Each school currently has access to only two Digital Classroom, which limits reach and usage across grades. Based on feedback from teachers and students, there is a growing interest in using these tools more regularly across subjects and classes. Setting up additional Digital Classrooms could help make digital learning accessible for all students within the school. Furthermore, it is suggested that the digital content, which has been well received by the students in classes 6th to 8th, may be extended to higher grades (9th to 12th) as well as to additional subjects beyond Mathematics and Science, to ensure continuity of learning. This will help maintain continuity in the mode of learning.

3. Strengthen Trainer Support through Recorded Training Sessions

While teachers have adapted well to digital classrooms and tools, continuous access to training resources will help them stay updated with evolving technologies and teaching practices. Although informal knowledge sharing occurs among teachers, providing recorded training sessions would offer consistent and accessible support, particularly for newly appointed or transferred teachers who may lack prior experience. These recorded sessions can be accessed by teachers at their convenience, ensuring that all teachers remain confident and capable of fully utilizing the digital infrastructure, thereby sustaining the quality and continuity of technology-enabled learning.

4. Development of Sustainability Plan

a. Low-cost, High-utilisation Model: From a resource perspective, sustainability should rely on a **low-cost, high-utilisation model**. Schools under the project should prioritize the use of existing digital assets SMART TVs, pen drives with preloaded Science and Mathematics content in Hindi, and Wi-Fi dongles and supplement them with freely available open-source educational content (DIKSHA, e-Pathshala, etc.) to enrich the existing video library. Additionally, the **absence of systematic tracking, lack of timely replacement of damaged pen drives, and intermittent maintenance** were observed as critical gaps. Hence, basic maintenance protocols such as **digital asset inventory registers, repair logs, dongle/pen drive tracking sheets, and quarterly audits** should be institutionalized at every school. Financial sustainability can be supported through convergence with school grants, local community contributions, or small-scale CSR support, but the model should remain functional without heavy external funding.

b. Continuous Monitoring and Reporting: Continuous monitoring and simple reporting mechanisms should be established to track the post-exit health of the project. Schools should develop and maintain

digital classroom usage registers, teacher session logs, student attendance and engagement records, and basic outcome indicators such as the number of digital classes conducted per week, subjects covered, and student participation rates. This data will not only support accountability but also help refine implementation over time.

5. Development of Convergence Plan

a. Integration with Existing Educational Frameworks and Government-Supported Programs: The Digital Shaala initiative should not operate in isolation but be **integrated with existing educational frameworks and government-supported programs** to maximize reach and impact. Alignment with initiatives supported by the Government of India and the Government of Maharashtra can provide both direction and scalability. The project is already aligned with **NEP 2020**, which emphasizes visualized, blended, and practical learning this alignment must now be formalized through structured convergence.

Convergence can also be established with existing government platforms such as **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) and PM eVIDYA**. This will enable schools to access an expanded pool of digital content beyond the project-supplied pen drives, addressing the finding that several pen drives were corrupted or contained incomplete files. Additionally, integrating Digital Classroom outputs into audio-visual presentations, and digital portfolios can further strengthen their presentation skills, relevance within the formal education system.

Administrative convergence is also key. Coordination with district education officials can help institutionalize reporting, streamline resource allocation, and ensure that **Digital classrooms are included in school development plans**. This systemic alignment will be essential for scaling and sustaining impact beyond the targeted schools under this project.

b. Partnership with Local Institutions and Stakeholders: Partnerships with local institutions and stakeholders can significantly enhance the ecosystem around the Digital Classrooms. Nearby colleges, technical institutes, or NGOs in Dindori can provide mentorship, teacher training, and exposure visits. Community engagement is equally important; involving parents during open house sessions or demonstration days can build awareness and support for experiential learning, especially in communities where such exposure is limited.

Furthermore, engaging the **School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)** as formal custodians of digital infrastructure, with regular review meetings on classroom usage and asset health, will institutionalize community ownership. These meetings can serve as an opportunity for parents to observe their children's practical learning experiences firsthand, interact with teachers and facilitators, and understand the benefits of visulised learning through Digital classrooms. Building this rapport will increase parents' awareness and involvement, creating a supportive environment that motivates students and encourages continued participation in digital classrooms.

8. Limitation

- **Limited Insights from Block Education Officer:** Interaction was conducted with the Block Education Officer (BEO), a government official; however, valuable insights were limited as the BEO was newly appointed and had limited knowledge of the intervention.

9. Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered from our discussion with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: A Digital Leap: Priya's Journey to Academic Excellence

Priya, a 7th-grade student from a government school in Dindori block, Nashik, always had a curiosity for Mathematics and Science but struggled to grasp complex concepts through traditional chalk-and-board teaching methods. Her school lacked digital resources, and like many of her peers, she found studies monotonous and difficult to follow.

Everything changed when the Program Digital Shaala, supported by PRIPL and implemented by Muskaan Dream Creative Foundation, was introduced in her school. As per the MoU, the programme aimed to set up digital classrooms and provide teacher training across 40 schools in Nashik, Maharashtra, with the objective of enhancing the learning experience of students in grades 6 to 10 in Science and Mathematics.

With the installation of Smart TVs and access to digital video content in Hindi for Science and Mathematics, Priya's classroom was transformed into an engaging learning space. The audio-visual aids helped her visualise mathematical problems and scientific concepts that were previously difficult to understand. Teachers, empowered through orientation sessions and capacity building under the programme, began integrating digital tools into their daily teaching.

Priya's interest and engagement grew significantly, and she went on to score the highest marks in Mathematics and Science in her class. Her teachers and Principal noted that the digital classroom not only improved her academic performance but also motivated her to attend school regularly. Priya's story reflects the programme's expected outcome of increased learning levels in Science and Mathematics.

Case Story 2: From Disengagement to Discovery: Rahul's Transformation Through Digital Learning

Rahul, a 6th-grade student from a small village in Dindori block, Nashik, was on the verge of dropping out of school. Coming from a rural household with no access to technology-based learning at home, he found it challenging to keep up with classroom teaching, particularly in Mathematics and Science. The traditional methods of instruction left him disinterested, and his academic performance continued to decline.

The introduction of the **Program Digital Shaala**, supported by **PRIPL** and implemented by **Muskaan Dream Creative Foundation**, marked a turning point in Rahul's academic journey. The programme, as outlined in the MoU, focused on providing digital accessibility in government schools to help students achieve a better learning experience inside the classroom. With the setup of Smart Android TVs with 4K resolution and curated digital video content for Science and Mathematics in Hindi, Rahul's classroom was equipped with tools that made learning visual and interactive.

The trained teachers, who underwent orientation sessions for both hardware and software usage under the programme, began delivering lessons using digital aids. For Rahul, watching animated explanations of scientific experiments and step-by-step solutions to mathematical problems brought subjects to life. Concepts that once seemed abstract became clear and relatable.

Gradually, Rahul's attendance improved, and so did his confidence. By the end of the academic year, he scored the highest marks in science in his class, a feat that surprised even his family. His teachers highlighted him as an example of how technology, when integrated into the classroom through programmes like Digital Shaala, can bridge the learning gap for students from underserved communities. Rahul's transformation stands as a testament to the programme's vision of bridging the digital divide and ensuring quality education for every child.

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