

Impact Assessment report

Providing counseling to MCGM school children studying in MCGM schools in Mumbai

Essel Mining & Industries Limited
A part of Aditya Birla group

Submitted by:
 CSRBOX
Doing Good in a Better Way

Certificate

This is to certify that the Impact Assessment report titled: '**Providing Counselling to MCGM School Children Studying in MCGM Schools in Mumbai**' is an original study conducted by CSRBOX and is submitted to Essel Mining & Industries Limited.

The Impact Assessment Study has been conducted as per the requirements of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Rules, 2014, as amended, and is compliant with the requirements of the law.

This study contains findings by CSRBOX, which are based on the review of secondary sources, as well as primary-level interactions. The impact assessment framework used by CSRBOX was created and implemented in accordance with the objectives and indicators of the project.

Bhomik Shah
Founder and CEO, CSRBOX

DISCLAIMER OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

- The Impact Assessment Study has been conducted as per the requirements of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Rules, 2014, as amended, and is compliant with the requirements of the law.
- This report shall be disclosed to those authorized in its entirety only without removing the disclaimer. CSRBOX has not performed an audit and does not express an opinion or any other form of assurance. Further, comments in our report are not intended, nor should they be interpreted to be legal advice or opinion.
- This report contains an analysis by CSRBOX considering the publications available from secondary sources and inputs gathered through interactions with the leadership team of Aditya Birla-Essel Mining & Industries Limited, project beneficiaries, and various knowledge partners. While the information obtained from the public domain has not been verified for authenticity, CSRBOX has taken due care to receive information from sources generally considered to be reliable.
- In preparing this report, CSRBOX has used and relied on data, material gathered through the internet, research reports, and discussions with personnel within CSRBOX as well personnel in related industries.

WITH SPECIFICS TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT, CSRBOX:

- Has neither conducted an audit nor due diligence nor validated the financial statements and projections provided by Aditya Birla-Essel Mining & Industries Limited;
- Wherever information was not available in the public domain, suitable assumptions were made to extrapolate values for the same;
- CSRBOX must emphasize that the realization of the benefits/improvisations accruing out of the recommendations set out within this report (based on secondary sources) is dependent on the continuing validity of the assumptions on which it is based. The assumptions will need to be reviewed and revised to reflect such changes in business trends, regulatory requirements, or the direction of the business as further clarity emerges. CSRBOX accepts no responsibility for the realization of the projected benefits;
- The premise of an impact assessment is the objective of the project along with output and outcome indicators pre-set by the programme design and implementation team. CSRBOX's impact assessment framework was designed and executed in alignment with those objectives and indicators.

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Executive Summary

Background

Aditya Birla's Essel Mining & Industries Limited is committed to corporate responsibility, actively collaborating with local communities to enhance societal well-being. Through a diverse range of initiatives and partnerships with community organisations, the company strives to foster a more equitable society. They provide valuable resources to community stakeholders, including awareness programs, campaigns, capacity-building initiatives, and infrastructural support.

At the heart of EMIL's approach is a dedication to engaging with marginalised communities, reflecting their deeply rooted core values. They embrace the principle of trusteeship, placing the welfare of underserved populations above purely business interests. Their CSR endeavours are primarily geared towards elevating the quality of life in rural areas, aiming to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of those they serve.

Project details

Oorja, a programme launched by Mpower, is dedicated to providing counselling services to students attending MCGM (Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai) schools in Mumbai. The main goal of the Oorja initiative is to boost the mental well-being of these school children by actively engaging both educators and parents in the counselling process. By fostering a supportive environment, the programme aims to nurture the emotional and psychological health of the students. This report delves into the impact of the Oorja initiative on MCGM schools during the fiscal year 2021-22. It evaluates how the program has positively influenced the students' mental health, as well as the effectiveness of involving teachers and parents in the counselling process.

Impact highlights

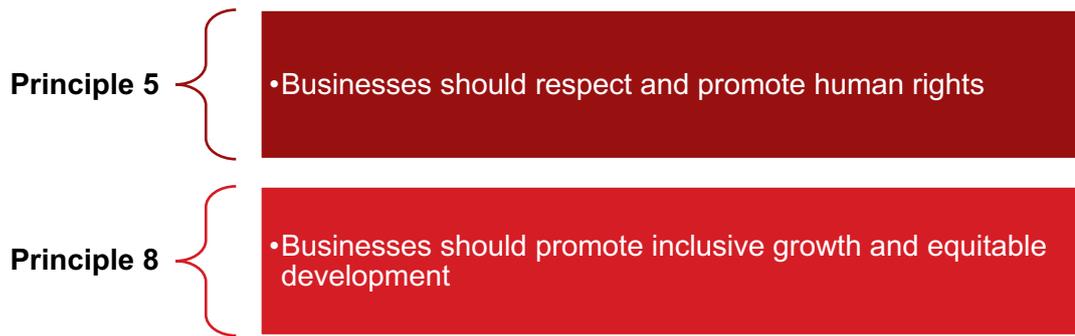
Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•89% of the beneficiaries belonged to the age group of 10-15 years.•63% of the student beneficiaries were girls.•61% of the student beneficiaries were from grade 8 and 9.•44% of the beneficiaries belong to 75,000-1 Lakh annual income group.
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•87% parents are aware about their child's mental health status.•50% of the parents think that there has been an increased awareness about mental health in the community.•87% of the parents get involved in their child's counselling process.
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•73% of the students are referred by the teacher for counselling.•69% of the student beneficiaries strongly agree that they feel comfortable in discussing their concerns with the counsellor.•64% of the students strongly agreed that the counselling room is a safe space.•70% of the students strongly agreed that there has been a positive impact on their academic performance as a result of counselling.•94% of the parent beneficiaries agree that there has been a positive change in their child's behaviour and well-being.

Convergence	}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% alignment with the National Mental Health Policy, 2014. • 100% alignment with SDG 3 Target.
Service Delivery		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56% of the student beneficiaries rated the counselling service as 5 - excellent (on a scale of 1-5). • 65% of the students beneficiaries rated the counsellor as 5 - excellent (on a scale of 1-5). • 63% of the parent beneficiaries rated the counsellor as 4 - good (on a scale of 1-5). • 86% of the counsellor rated the overall impact of the project as 5 - excellent (on a scale of 1-5).

Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

SDG Target	Alignment
 <p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</p> <p>The project aims to improve mental health outcomes by providing counselling and support services to individuals in need, thus contributing to the goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.</p>
 <p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	<p>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</p> <p>By addressing mental health issues among students, the project supports the goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all.</p>
 <p>10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES</p>	<p>Reduce inequality within and among countries.</p> <p>The project seeks to reduce disparities in mental health access and outcomes, particularly among marginalised communities, thereby contributing to the goal of reducing inequalities within societies.</p>
 <p>16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.</p> <p>By addressing mental health concerns and promoting access to support services, the project may contribute to building peaceful and inclusive societies, in line with the goal of promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions.</p>

Alignment with ESG principles



National priorities

National Policies/Schemes	Alignment
National Mental Health Policy, 2014	The project aligns with the objectives outlined in India's National Mental Health Policy, which aims to promote mental health, prevent mental illnesses, and ensure access to mental health services for all citizens.
National Health Policy, 2017	The project supports the goals of India's National Health Policy, which prioritises mental health as an integral component of overall health and well-being and emphasises the importance of addressing mental health issues through community-based approaches.
Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)	RKSK is a national adolescent health program that focuses on promoting the mental health and well-being of adolescents. The project aligns with RKSK objectives by providing mental health support to school children and adolescents.
National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM)	The project aligns with NRHM and NUHM initiatives aimed at improving access to primary healthcare services, including mental health services, in rural and urban areas, respectively.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Details
<i>BRSR</i>	Business Responsibility & Sustainability Reporting
<i>CSR</i>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<i>EMIL</i>	Essel Mining & Industries Limited
<i>ESG</i>	Environment, Social and Governance
<i>FGD</i>	Focused Group Discussion
<i>FY</i>	Financial Year
<i>ICDS</i>	Integrated Child Development Services
<i>IDI</i>	In-Depth Interview
<i>IEC</i>	Information Education Communication
<i>IRECS</i>	Inclusiveness, Relevance, Expectations, Convergence and Service Delivery
<i>KII</i>	Key Informant Interviews
<i>MCGM</i>	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
<i>NRHM</i>	National Rural Health Mission
<i>NUHM</i>	National Urban Health Mission
<i>RKSK</i>	Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram
<i>SDG</i>	Sustainable Development Goal
<i>SEBI</i>	Securities & Exchange Board of India



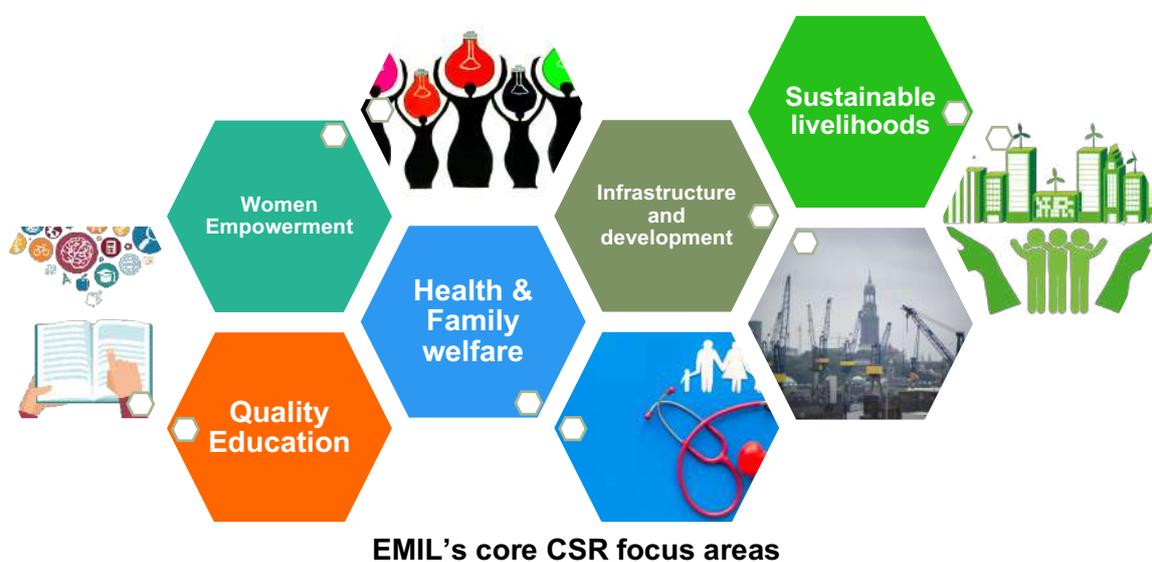
Chapter 1:

Programme overview and CSR initiatives of EMIL

Chapter 1: Programme overview and CSR initiatives of EMIL

1.1. CSR activities of the Organisation

As a unit of the Aditya Birla Group, Essel Mining & Industries Limited (EMIL) recognises its responsibility to contribute to the social and environmental well-being of the communities it operates within. EMIL's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reflects the Aditya Birla Group's core values, placing service to people and society at the forefront of its mission. EMIL believes that its purpose of existence is through the development of people & communities. EMIL fulfils its corporate social responsibility through initiatives in 5 thematic areas, spread across all operational geographies that include infrastructure development, sustainable livelihood, health & family welfare, education & capacity building, and social causes by empowering women.



EMIL's core CSR focus areas

The mental health landscape in India among school children poses a complex challenge. The pressure from expectations, societal norms and family dynamics often lead to issues like anxiety, depression and behavioural problems in students. Additionally, factors such as socio-differences, urbanisation and cultural stigmas add layers of complexity to the situation making it a nuanced environment to address mental health needs. A large number of students face anxiety, depression and other emotional struggles affecting their schoolwork and general happiness. Moreover, the negative attitude towards health issues often stops students from seeking help or getting the support they need. In countries with values such as India talking about mental health is often avoided or dismissed making it harder, for those who are struggling.

1.2. Programme Overview

Within the array of programs implemented by EMIL, the project to provide counselling to MCGM school children studying in MCGM schools in Mumbai was executed through Mpower's Oorja initiative. Mpower is an organisation that concentrates on creating awareness, delivering mental health services, and advocating for the well-being of individuals facing mental health challenges. The primary objective of the Oorja initiative is to enhance the mental well-being of school children by actively involving both teachers and parents in the process. The objective

is not only to address existing challenges but also to improve the overall functioning of the students. By fostering collaboration between educators and parents, the initiative aims to create a supportive environment that nurtures the emotional and psychological health of the children.

Mpower's Oorja Cell initiative operates as a centralised platform employing an efficient model for addressing the mental health of children and adolescents, offering guidance through clinical services. This specific aspect of the programme focuses on delivering clinical care to young individuals facing challenges such as anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, substance abuse, sleep disturbances, trauma, stress-related issues, behavioural / conduct disorders, and other school-related conditions like peer pressure, teasing, bullying, exam stress, and general school-related problems.

Counsellors are currently available throughout the day in designated schools to address these concerns. Weekly visits are organised in specific wards, with each counsellor assigned to six school buildings within their respective wards on fixed days. To enhance awareness among children and parents about the presence of Project Oorja Counsellors and the availability of counselling services in schools, Mpower has strategically placed visually appealing standees in each school building as informative material for better outreach.

1.3. Programme Activities

The activities under the work scope of the implementation partner encompass:

			
Establishing Oorja support cells in MCGM schools across 5 wards of Mumbai	To Provide Clinical Care (counselling) to Children and Adolescents facing Mental Health Issues	Spreading Awareness about the Existence of Mental Health Issues among Teachers and Parents	Ensuring Availability of Counsellors during School hours



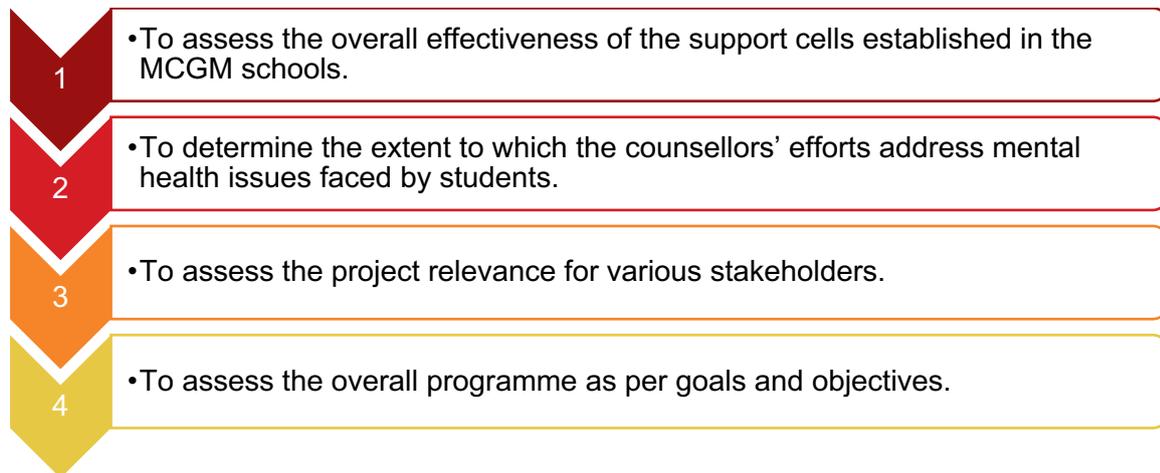
Chapter 2:

Design and Approach for Impact Assessment

Chapter 2: Design and Approach

2.1. Objectives of the study

CSRBOX assessed the impact of EMIL's "Providing counselling to MCGM school children studying in MCGM schools in Mumbai" project for the year 2021-2022. The goal was to examine the effectiveness of the established support cells within schools and evaluate the impact of counselling initiatives. The objectives of the study were:



2.2. Sampling

For the assessment, a two-pronged approach for data collection and review has been chosen. The Secondary data had been obtained from a literature review, while the primary data was obtained through qualitative and quantitative data collection methods.



The figure above illustrates the study approach used in data collection and review. The secondary study includes a review of annual reports, internal data, monitoring reports, government data & reports, and other studies and research by renowned organisations available in the public domain to draw insights into the situation of the area. The primary study comprises qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis. The qualitative aspects include In-depth Interviews (IDIs), group discussions, and observation from the study area. The list of stakeholders is mentioned in the sampling section.

2.2.1. Quantitative Sampling

The sampling has been carried out at the beneficiary level among 4 selected wards. The table below shows the sampling strategy where we have considered a Confidence Level of 95% and a 7% Margin of Error for the project.

Ward	Primary Stakeholders	Sample	Mode of data collection
A (2 cells)	Students**	8	Quantitative survey
	Parents*	12	
	Counsellors	2	
E (3 cells)	Students**	13	
	Parents*	17	
	Counsellors	3	
ME (5 cells)	Students**	23	
	Parents*	26	
	Counsellors	5	
PN (5 cells)	Students**	23	
	Parents*	26	
	Counsellors	5	
Total		163	

*Parents of students of grades 1-6 having mental health issues and are availing clinical care through Oorja support cells have been interviewed.

** Students and caregivers of students who availed counselling during the project period (2021-2022) have been surveyed.

2.2.2. Qualitative Sampling

The list of stakeholders is mentioned below:

Sr. No.	Stakeholder	Mode of data collection	No. of Interviews
1	Teachers	In-Depth Interviews	2 (From each ward)
2	Principals	In-Depth Interviews	1 (From each ward)
3	Project implementation Team	In-Depth Interviews	2 (For the entire assessment)
4	EMIL CSR Team members	In-Depth Interviews	1 (For the entire assessment)
Total			15

2.3. Evaluation Framework

IRECS framework

Given the objectives of the study to determine the inclusiveness, relevance, expectations, convergence, and service delivery of the project, the evaluation has used the IRECS Framework. Using the criteria of the IRECS framework, the evaluation has assessed the project's contribution to the results, while keeping in mind the multiplicity of factors that may be affecting the overall outcome. The social impact assessment hinges on the following pillars:

Inclusiveness

The extent to which communities equitably access the benefits of assets created and services delivered.

Relevance

The extent to which the project is geared to respond to the 'felt' needs of the community.

Expectations

The extent of intended and unintended positive benefits, and socio-economic and cultural changes have accrued for beneficiaries.

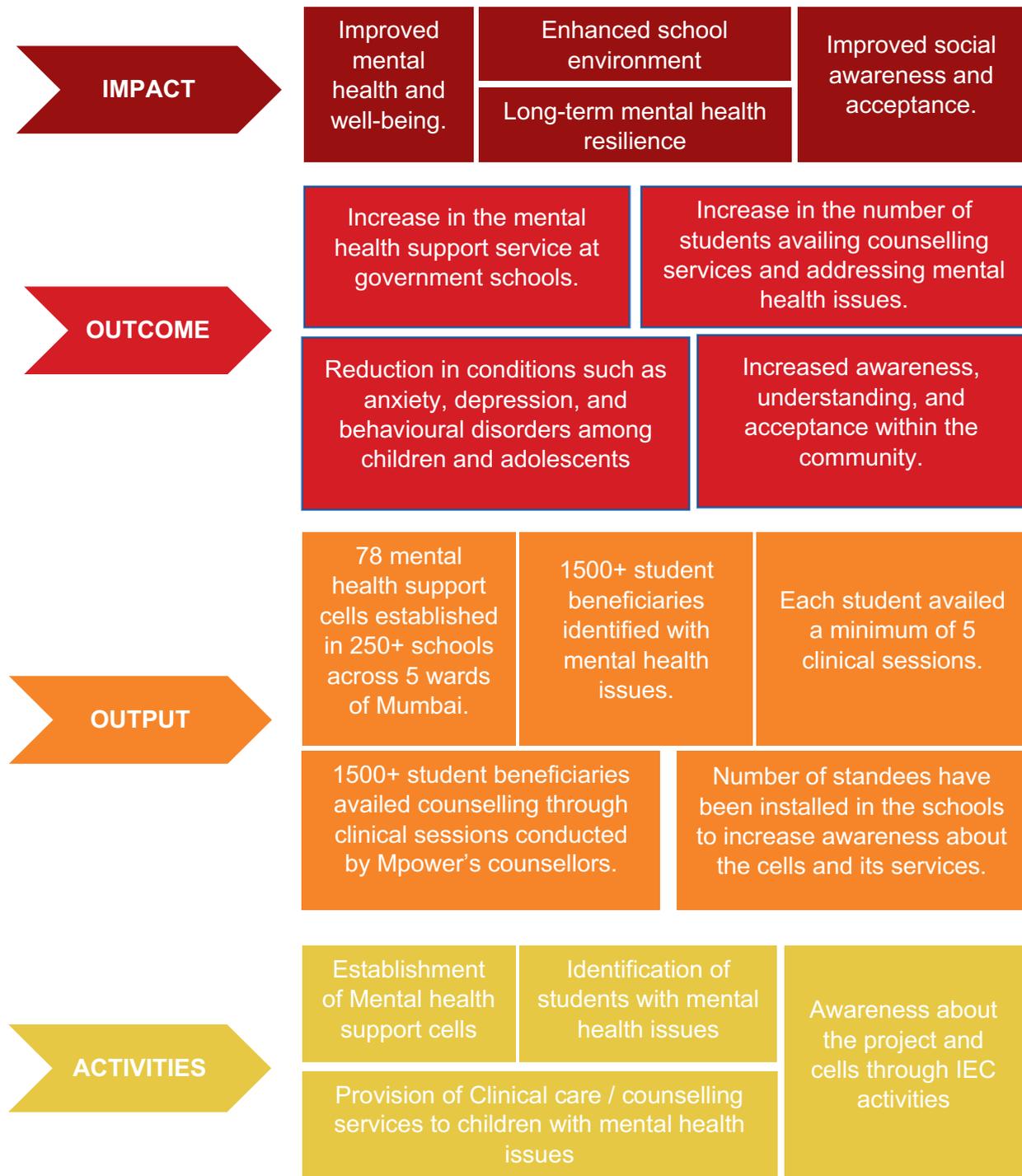
Convergence

Judging the degree of convergence with government / other partners; the degree of stakeholder buy-in achieved.

Service delivery

The extent to which cost - efficient and time-efficient methods and processes were used to achieve results.

2.4. Theory of Change



2.5. Limitations of the study

- A limitation of the study was the inability to capture parental perspectives due to challenges in securing parent availability. Despite multiple attempts to reach out to parents for surveys, their participation was limited, hindering the comprehensive understanding of parental viewpoints in the assessment.



Chapter 3:

Impact findings

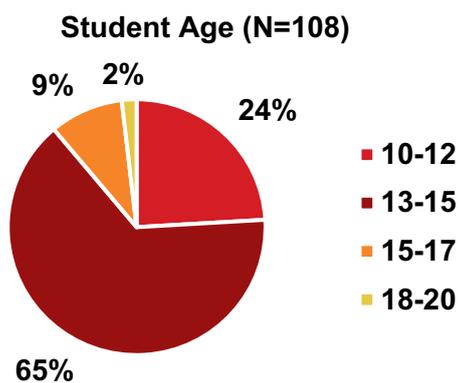
Chapter 3: Impact Findings

This section of the report includes detailed findings about the impact of the Oorja project. The findings are based on the responses to the primary beneficiaries' questionnaire, insights gained from conversations with key stakeholders and field visits

3.1 Beneficiary Profile

This section provides an overview of various factors, such as gender, age, income, occupation, etc. that are specific to the targeted population. The analysis of these factors helps understand the impact of the initiative.

- **Age:**

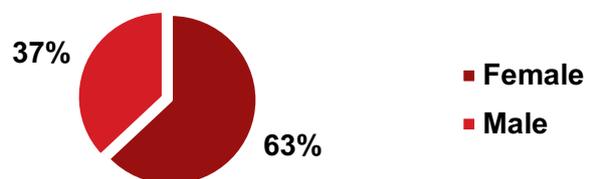


The majority of students benefiting from the Oorja counselling services were within the age range of 13-15 years, comprising 65% of the total. Additionally, 24% fell within the 10-12 age group, while 9% were aged 15-17. Notably, parents interviewed for the assessment reported that their children, primarily aged 6-10 years, received counselling through the Oorja support cells. The project reaches across various age groups, indicating their effectiveness in catering to the diverse mental health needs of students within the MCGM school system.

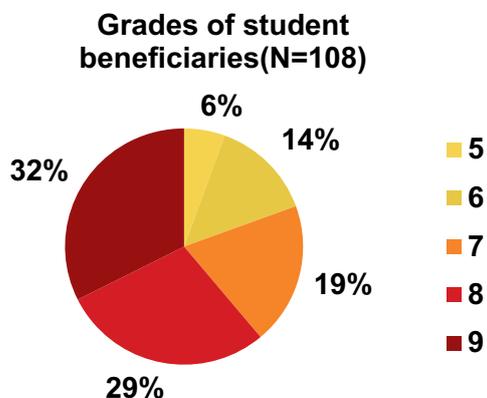
- **Gender:**

63% of students benefiting from counselling services through the Oorja support cells were female, with males comprising the remaining 37%. This gender distribution highlights the program's significant impact in addressing the mental health needs of female students within the MCGM school system.

Student gender (N=108)

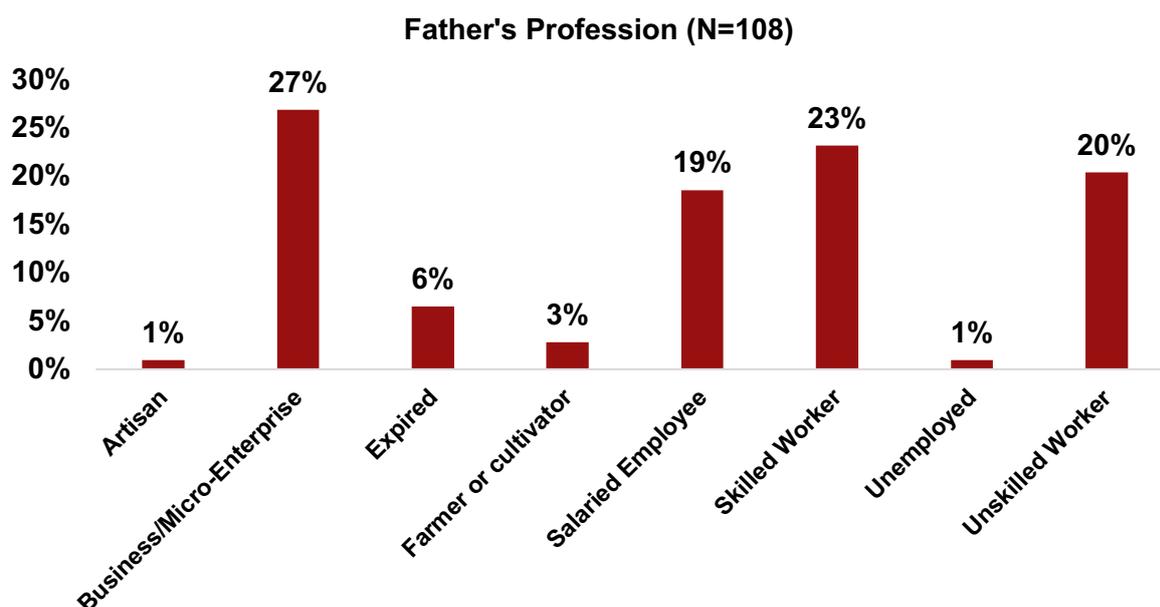


- **Grades of student beneficiaries:**



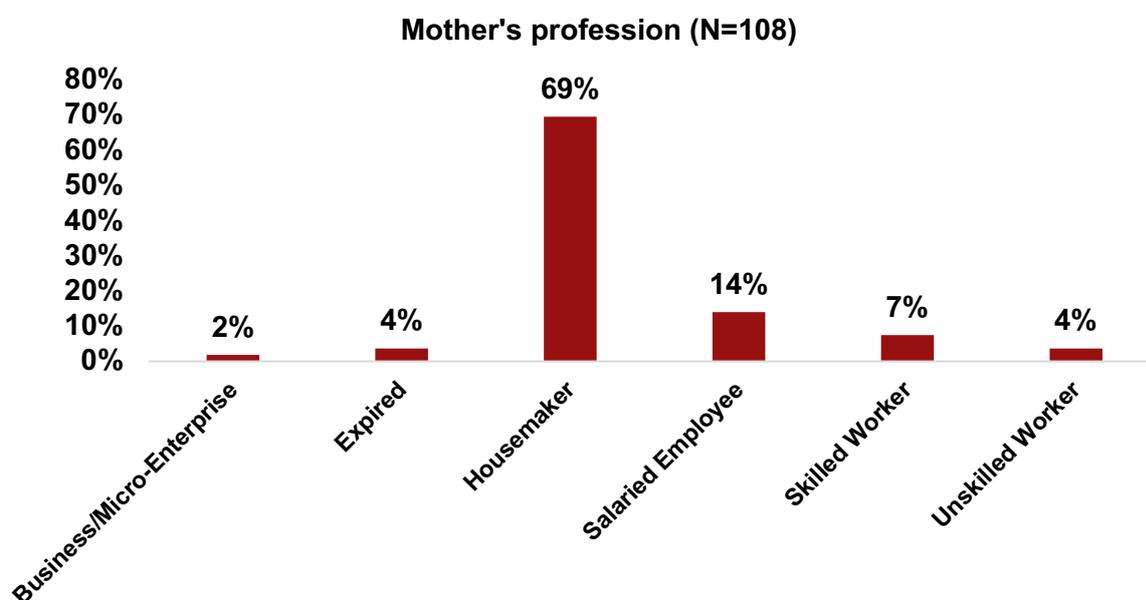
There is a varied distribution of student beneficiaries across different grades, with 32% enrolled in the 9th grade, followed closely by 29% in the 8th grade. Furthermore, 19% were studying in the 7th grade, while 14% and 6% were enrolled in the 6th and 5th grades, respectively. This breakdown illustrates the widespread utilisation of counselling services across multiple grade levels, indicating the program's efficacy in catering to the mental health needs of students throughout their academic journey within the MCGM school system.

- Occupation of the student beneficiaries' father:



The largest proportion, at 27%, comprises individuals engaged in business or micro-enterprises, which encompass activities such as vegetable vending or small-scale businesses. Additionally, 23% are skilled workers, underlining the significance of specialised labour within the community. Salaried employees make up 19% of the group, indicating a stable employment sector, while 20% are unskilled workers, representing a blend of formal and informal labour. Although smaller in percentages, professions such as artisans, farmers/cultivators, and unemployed individuals still contribute significantly to the beneficiary group's demographic makeup.

- Occupation of the student beneficiaries' mother:

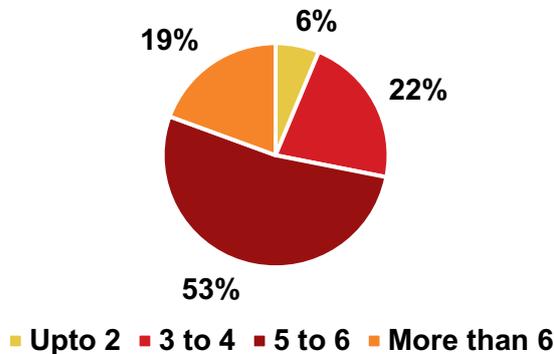


The predominant occupation, with 69%, is homemaking, underscoring the central role of caregiving and household management in the community. Moreover, 14% of mothers hold salaried positions, reflecting their meaningful contributions to formal employment sectors. A notable 7% are skilled workers, indicating a presence of specialised expertise among mothers,

while a mere 4% engage in business or micro-enterprises, suggesting a relatively smaller entrepreneurial presence.

- **Family structure:**

No. of family members (N=160)

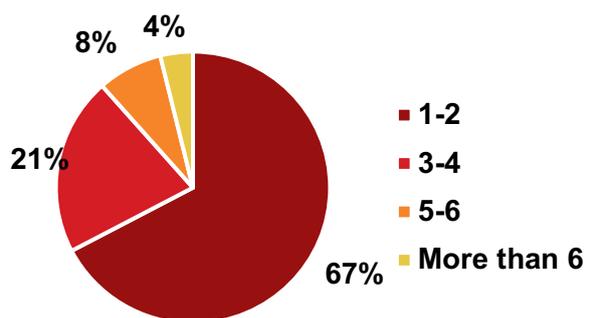


A majority, constituting 53%, hail from families with 5-6 members, indicating a prevalent middle-range family structure. Moreover, 22% come from smaller households comprising 3-4 members, while 19% belong to larger families exceeding 6 members, underscoring the presence of extended family dynamics within the community. Additionally, 6% of beneficiaries come from very small households of up to 2 members, reflecting a smaller but notable demographic. These insights shed light on the varied familial

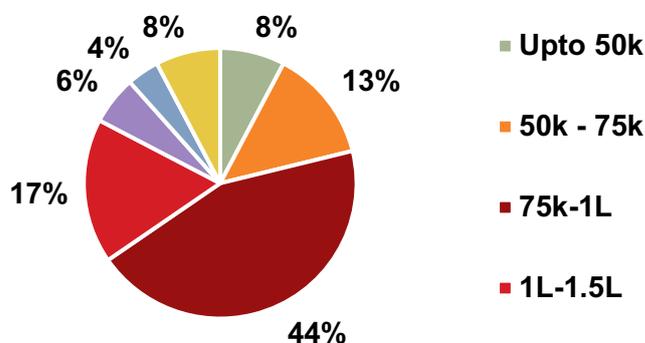
contexts in which students navigate their mental health challenges, emphasizing the importance of tailored support strategies to address their diverse needs effectively.

67%, come from households with only one or two earning members, highlighting potential financial constraints and the reliance on limited sources of income. In contrast, 21% of beneficiaries belong to families with three or four earning members, indicating a slightly more stable financial situation. Moreover, 8% of students hail from families with five or six earning members, while 4% have more than six earning members, suggesting a higher level of financial stability and possibly greater access to resources within these households. These findings highlight how familial economic dynamics plays in a part in the child's mental health needs.

No. of earning members in the family (N=52)



Annual Household Income (N=52)

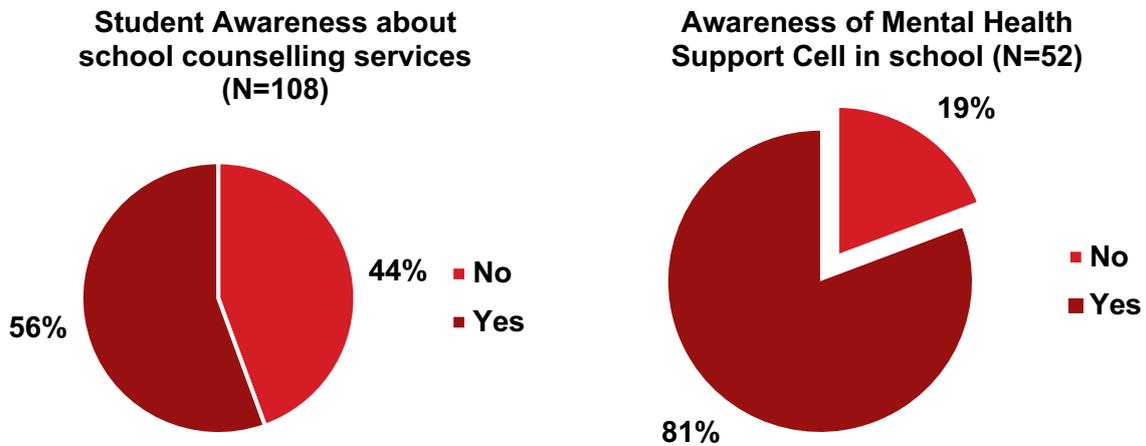


44%, falls within the income bracket of Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 100,000, indicating a significant presence of families with moderate income levels. Moreover, 17% report incomes ranging from Rs. 100,000 to Rs. 150,000 annually, while 13% fall within the Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 75,000 range, highlighting varied but still relatively stable financial

situations. However, a notable 8% of households earn less than Rs. 50,000 annually, pointing towards potential financial challenges faced by a segment of the beneficiary families. Furthermore, 18% either belong to higher income brackets or choose not to disclose their income.

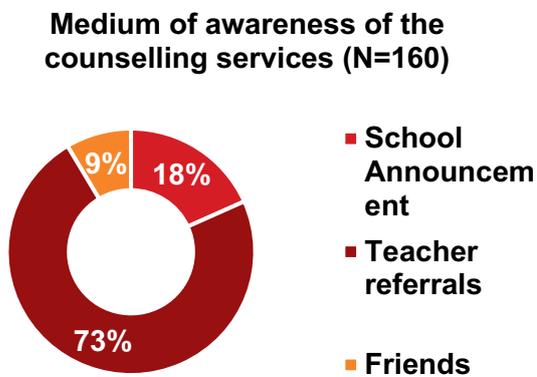
3.2 Beneficiary awareness about Oorja support cells.

- Awareness about the existence of a mental health support cell in school.



A majority of student beneficiaries, constituting 56%, were aware of the presence of the counselling service, indicating a significant level of visibility. However, a notable 44% of students were unaware of its existence, suggesting a need for improved communication and outreach efforts. Conversely, a striking 81% of parent beneficiaries were knowledgeable about the mental health support cell, reflecting a higher level of awareness. Hence there is a need for increased awareness initiatives to ensure equitable access to mental health resources for all students and their families.

- Medium of awareness



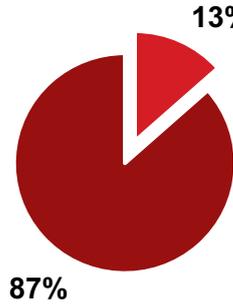
73% of student beneficiaries, became aware of their school's counselling service primarily through their teachers, who often referred them to the counsellor. This underscores the pivotal role of educators in facilitating access to mental health support for students. Additionally, 18% reported learning about the service through school announcements, indicating the effectiveness of institutional communication channels in disseminating information. Conversely, a smaller proportion, at 9%, discovered the

counselling service through peer referrals, highlighting the influence of social networks among students.

3.3 Parent awareness about child's mental health

A significant majority of parents, constituting 87%, acknowledged being aware of their child's mental health concerns prior to their child seeking counselling services. This indicates a high level of parental recognition and understanding of their child's emotional well-being. However, 13% of parents reported not being aware of their child's mental health issues before the counselling intervention. This finding highlights the importance of improving awareness and communication channels between parents, students, and educational institutions regarding

Parental awareness of child's mental health prior to counseling (N=52)



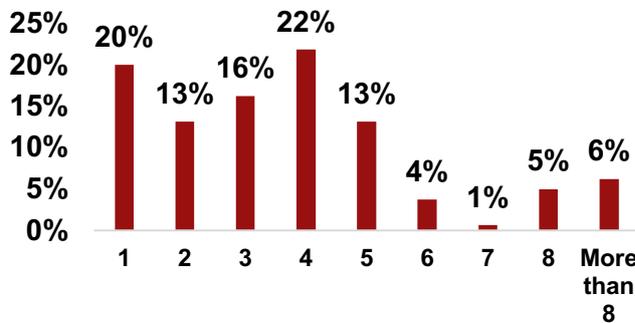
- No
- Yes

mental health matters. Enhanced awareness can enable proactive support and early intervention, ultimately promoting better mental health outcomes for students.

3.4 Counselling sessions

- No. of sessions attended:

No. of counselling sessions attended by the student (N=160)

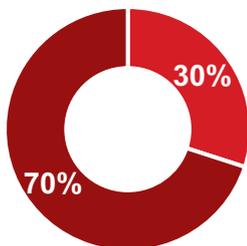


22%, attended four sessions, suggesting a notable commitment to the program. Moreover, 20% attended only one session, while 13% attended two or five sessions each, reflecting a spectrum of involvement levels. Interestingly, 6% attended more than eight sessions, indicating sustained participation in the counselling process. However, qualitative insights from interactions with counsellors reveal that most students require a minimum of two to three sessions before feeling

comfortable enough to discuss their mental health concerns. Addressing these concerns often necessitates multiple sessions, sometimes spanning over a year, underscoring the importance of long-term support and the complex nature of mental health intervention.

- Impact on the student's academics

Positive Impact on academic performance through counselling (N=160)



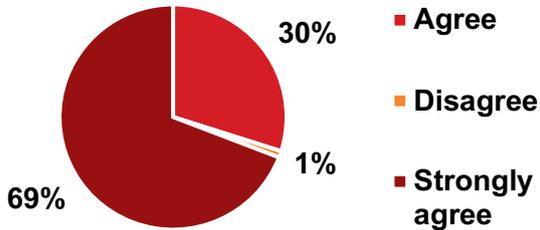
- Agree
- Strongly agree

70% of the beneficiaries expressed strong agreement regarding improvements in their academic performance. Additionally, 30% acknowledged an improvement in their exam scores and attentiveness in class following the counselling sessions. This highlights the significant impact of mental health support on academic outcomes and classroom engagement. The findings

suggest that the counselling interventions provided through the Oorja cells have not only addressed mental health concerns but also positively influenced students' educational experiences. Such outcomes underscore the importance of integrating mental health support into educational settings to promote holistic student well-being and academic success.

- Student's comfort during the counselling sessions:

Students' comfort level in personal problem discussions with counselor (N=108)



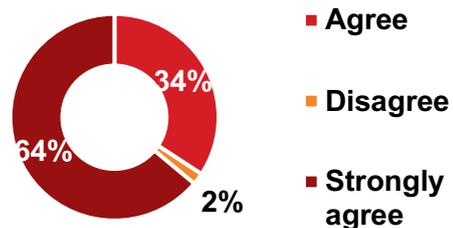
A significant level of comfort and safety among student beneficiaries in discussing their mental health concerns with the counsellor, with 69% expressing strong agreement and an additional 31% agreeing to feel comfortable during these discussions. This indicates a high level of trust and rapport established between the students and the counsellors within the Oorja program. The findings highlight the effectiveness of the counselling approach in creating a supportive and conducive environment for open dialogue about mental health issues. Such a positive

perception underscores the program's success in fostering a safe space where students feel heard and understood, ultimately facilitating their emotional well-being and resilience.

- Counselling room as a safe space:

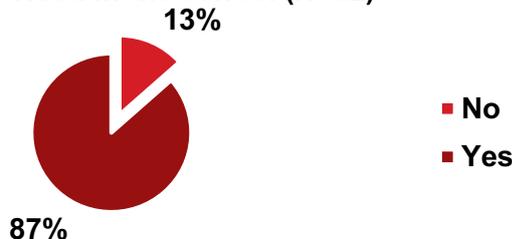
a significant perception among student beneficiaries regarding the safety of counselling rooms for discussing mental health concerns, with 64% strongly agreeing and an additional 34% agreeing to the same. Despite space constraints in Mumbai's MCGM schools, where designated counselling rooms are often unavailable, counsellors make efforts to maintain consistency by conducting sessions in the same room whenever possible. This approach aims to enhance accessibility and foster a sense of safety and familiarity for students seeking support. The findings underscore the importance of creating conducive environments for mental health discussions within educational settings, even in the face of logistical challenges. Such efforts contribute to building trust and rapport between students and counsellors, facilitating effective support for their emotional well-being.

Safe space: Counseling room for student concerns (N=108)



- Parent children connect about counselling provided in the school:

Parent-Child discussion on counselling provided in the school (N=52)



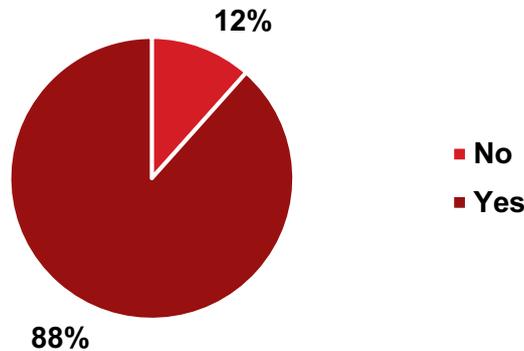
A significant majority of parents, comprising 87%, reported being informed by their child about the counselling services provided at school, indicating an active communication channel between students and parents regarding mental health support. However, 13% of parents stated that their child never discusses counselling

with them. Qualitative insights from counsellor interactions reveal that children under the age of 10 often lack understanding of their own mental health concerns, leading to a reluctance to discuss counselling with their parents. In cases where significant issues arise, counsellors proactively involve parents by arranging meetings at school to discuss their child's mental

health. These findings underscore the importance of age-appropriate communication strategies and proactive parental involvement in addressing children's mental health needs within educational settings.

- **Parent involvement in counselling**

Parental involvement prior to child counseling (N=52)



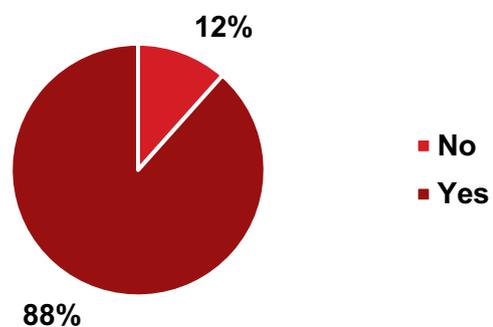
a significant majority of parents, accounting for 88%, indicated that both teachers and counsellors involve them in their child's mental health concerns prior to initiating counselling sessions, demonstrating a proactive approach to parental engagement in addressing student well-being. However, 12% of parents reported not being informed about their child's mental health issues before counselling begins. Qualitative insights from counsellor interactions reveal that in certain cases where a child's mental health is impacted by

family issues or external relationships, parents may not be involved initially unless the situation escalates to a severe level. This protocol aims to balance confidentiality with the necessity of parental involvement in critical situations.

- **Informing parents about their child's counselling progress:**

88%, reported being regularly updated about their child's counselling process and progress, highlighting a strong communication channel between counsellors and parents. Qualitative insights from counsellor interactions further reveal that in cases involving behavioural or developmental issues, parents are consistently kept informed and involved in their child's counselling journey. Additionally, parents may be requested to monitor their child's behaviour at home when they are not in school, indicating a collaborative approach between school and home environments to support the child's well-being.

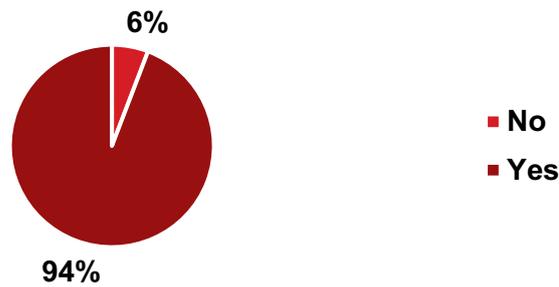
Parental updates on child's counseling progress (N=52)



- **Changes in Child's behaviour and well-being because of counselling:**

94%, reported observing positive changes in their child's behaviour and well-being because of the counselling process, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention in addressing their child's mental health concerns. However, 6% of parents noted that they had not yet witnessed

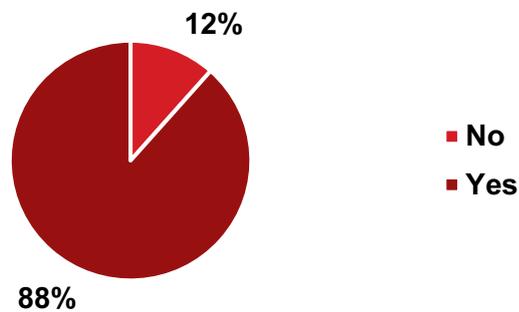
Observed positive changes in child's behavior or well-being (N=52)



significant changes, potentially due to the ongoing nature of the counselling process. This suggests that while some parents may see immediate improvements, others may require more time to notice substantial changes in their child's behaviour and well-being.

- Counselling help to parents to address child's mental health concerns:**

Addressing challenges of parents regarding child's mental health (N=52)



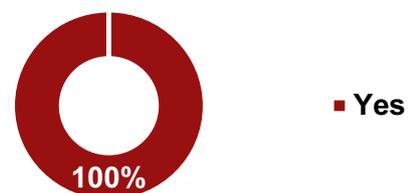
A significant majority of parents, totalling 88%, acknowledged that counsellors assisted when they needed support in managing their child's behaviour or mental health issues, reflecting the effectiveness of the counselling services in addressing familial concerns. Qualitative insights from counsellor interactions revealed instances where counsellors extended their support to parents, particularly when the child's mental health was

impacted by parental behaviour or actions. Additionally, in cases involving developmental issues, counsellors played a pivotal role in guiding parents on how to effectively navigate and address their child's needs.

- Counselling impact in the future:**

All parents surveyed expressed confidence that the counselling therapy their child received would equip them to address future issues effectively. This unanimous sentiment reflects a strong belief in the long-term benefits of the counselling intervention in preparing their child to navigate challenges ahead. The data underscores the perceived effectiveness and value of the counselling program in not only addressing immediate concerns but also in providing enduring skills and resilience for future adversities. Such high levels of parental confidence highlight the importance of ongoing support and investment in mental health interventions within educational settings.

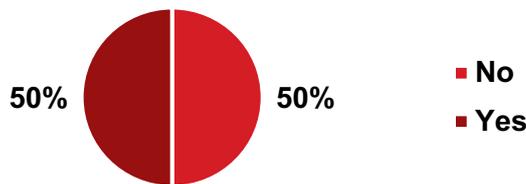
Counselling benefits in the long run (N=52)



- Mental health awareness within the community:**

Half of the respondents, totalling 50%, reported witnessing positive changes in mental health awareness over the years. This suggests a growing acceptance and understanding of mental health issues within the community. However, the remaining 50% expressed concerns that mental health still carries a stigma within their community, with individuals availing of mental health therapy often being stigmatised or labelled negatively. This highlights persistent

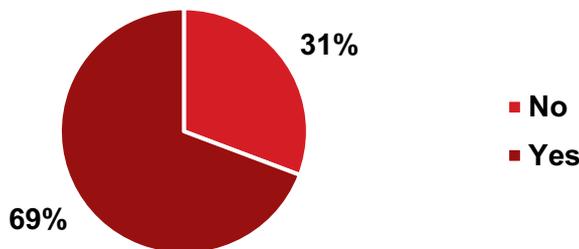
Awareness about mental health in the community (N=52)



challenges in combating stigma and fostering greater acceptance and support for mental health issues within the community.

- **Parent suggestions to other caregivers to avail of counselling therapy:**

Parents encouragement for caregivers to utilize mental health support cell services (N=52)



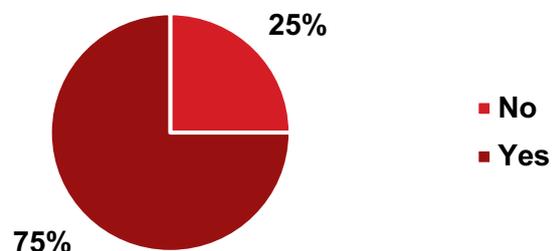
A significant majority of parents, constituting 69%, reported advocating for mental health support by encouraging other parents with children in the same school to consider counselling if their child is experiencing mental health concerns. This indicates a proactive effort within the community to promote mental well-being and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues. However, 31% of parents stated that they have not yet made such

suggestions, potentially indicating a need for further awareness and education on the benefits of counselling services. These findings underscore the importance of peer support and community advocacy in normalising discussions about mental health and encouraging help-seeking behaviours among families within the school community.

- **Student peer recommendation**

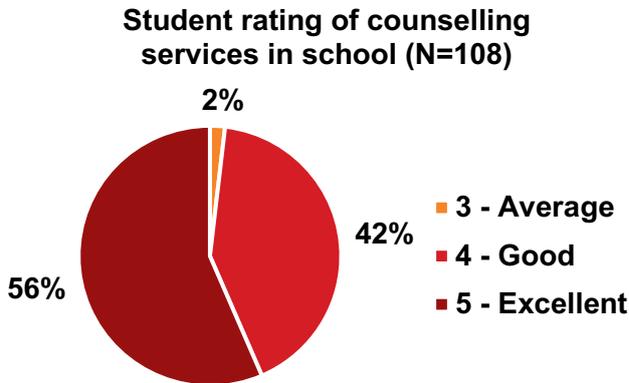
A significant majority of students, comprising 75%, reported actively advocating for mental health support by recommending their friends to utilise counselling services through the school's support cell when they become aware of their friends facing issues requiring attention. This indicates a positive peer support network within the school community, where students are willing to assist their peers in accessing necessary resources for mental well-being. However, 25% of students expressed reluctance in recommending counselling to their friends, citing concerns about disclosing their counselling engagement. This finding underscores the continued presence of stigma surrounding mental health issues among some students, highlighting the need for ongoing efforts to destigmatise counselling and promote open conversations about mental health within the student body.

Recommendation to friends for availing counselling services (N=108)



3.5 Counselling impact rating

- Student rating for the counselling service



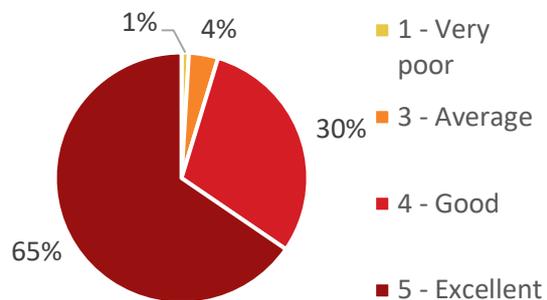
The majority of students, accounting for 56%, rated the counselling sessions as excellent (5 on a scale of 1-5), while 41% rated them as good (4 on a scale of 1-5), reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the services provided. Additionally, a small percentage, comprising 2%, rated the sessions as average (3 on a scale of 1-5). These findings indicate overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of the counselling sessions among the student beneficiaries. The high

proportion of students rating the sessions as excellent suggests that the counselling program has successfully met the expectations and needs of the students, contributing to their overall well-being and satisfaction with the support received.

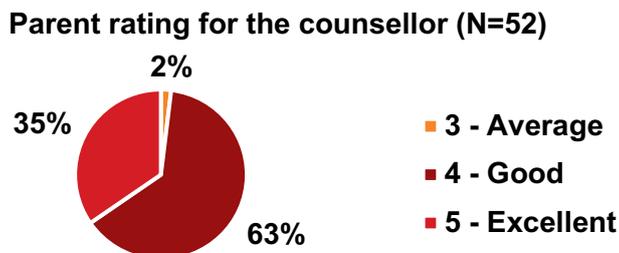
- Student rating for the counsellor

A significant majority of students, comprising 65%, rated the counsellor who provided counselling to them as excellent 5 on a scale of 1-5), indicating a high level of satisfaction with the counsellor's performance. Additionally, 31% rated the counsellor as good (4 on a scale of 1-5), reflecting continued positive feedback on the quality of counselling services. A smaller proportion of students, constituting 4%, rated the counsellor as average (3 on a scale of 1-5), while only 1% (1 on a scale of 1-5) rated the counsellor poorly. These findings suggest overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the counsellor's competence and effectiveness in delivering counselling support to student beneficiaries.

Student rating for the counsellor (N=108)



- Parent rating for the counsellor



Most parents, accounting for 63%, rated the counsellor who provided counselling therapy to their child as excellent, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the counsellor's performance. Additionally, 35% rated the counselling session as good, reflecting continued positive feedback on the quality of

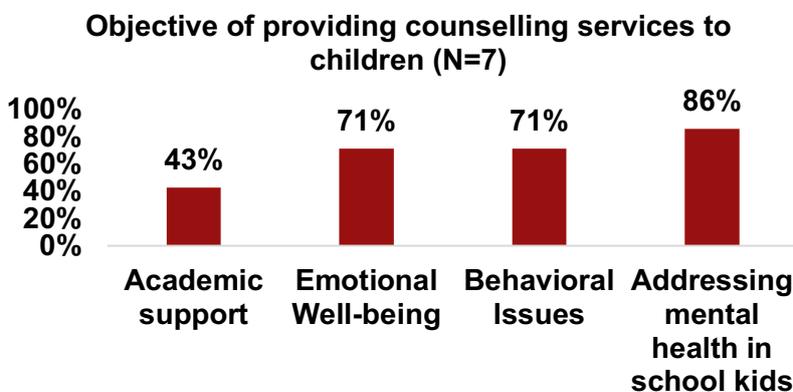
counselling services. A small percentage of parents, constituting 2%, rated the counselling session as average. These findings suggest overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the

counsellor's competence and effectiveness in delivering counselling support to student beneficiaries.

3.6 Counsellor perspective



- Objective of the counselling initiative.

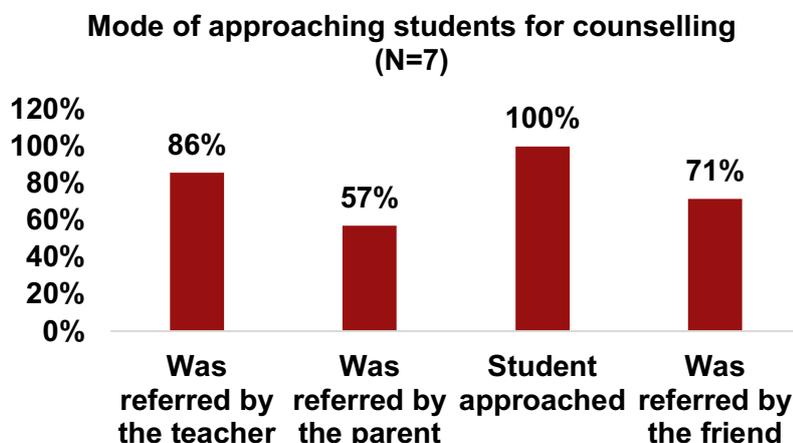


The data indicates the primary objectives of the counsellor when providing counselling therapy to children. Academic support is targeted in 43% of cases, while emotional well-being and addressing behavioural issues are the focus in 71% of cases. Moreover, a significant majority, accounting for 86% of counselling

sessions aim to address mental health concerns specifically in school children. These findings highlight the multifaceted approach of the counsellor in addressing various aspects of students' well-being, including academic performance, emotional health, and behavioural challenges.

- Mode of approaching students for counselling.

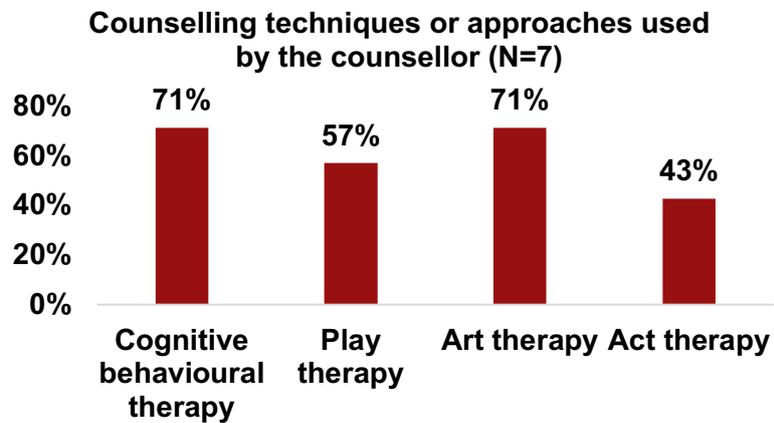
86% of cases, involves students being referred by their teachers, indicating a proactive role of educators in identifying and addressing students' mental health needs. Additionally, a considerable proportion, representing 57% of students are referred by their parents, highlighting the involvement of families in seeking support for their children's well-being. Notably, all students approached the counselling services themselves, indicating a high level of awareness and agency in seeking help.



Furthermore, a significant number, accounting for 71% of students are referred by their friends, underscoring the peer influence and support in encouraging help-seeking behaviours among students.

- **Counselling approaches to address mental health concerns.**

The provided data showcases the various therapeutic techniques and approaches utilised by counsellors to address mental health concerns among students through counselling. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is employed in 71% of cases, indicating its widespread use as a method to address cognitive and behavioural patterns contributing to mental health issues. Play therapy is utilised in 57% of cases, reflecting its effectiveness in providing

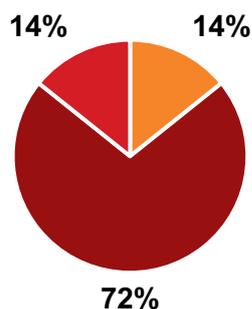


children with a safe and expressive outlet for processing emotions and experiences. Similarly, art therapy is also employed in 71% of cases, highlighting its value in promoting creativity and self-expression as a means of therapeutic healing. Additionally, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is utilised in 43% of cases, indicating its role in fostering mindfulness and acceptance of difficult emotions among students. These findings underscore the counsellor's holistic approach in employing diverse therapeutic modalities tailored to meet the unique needs of students and promote their mental health and well-being.

Similarly, art therapy is also employed in 71% of cases, highlighting its value in promoting creativity and self-expression as a means of therapeutic healing. Additionally, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is utilised in 43% of cases, indicating its role in fostering mindfulness and acceptance of difficult emotions among students. These findings underscore the counsellor's holistic approach in employing diverse therapeutic modalities tailored to meet the unique needs of students and promote their mental health and well-being.

- **Teacher's understanding of the student's mental health**

Teacher's understanding of student mental health in government schools (N=7)



■ 1 - Very poor ■ 3 - Average ■ 5 - Very good

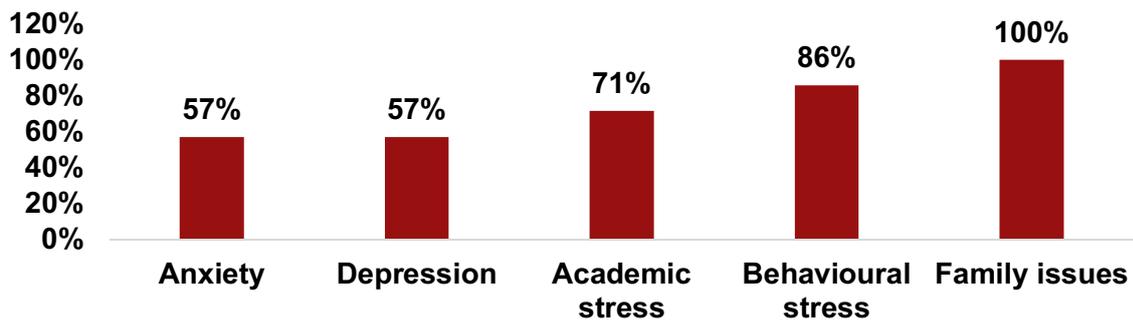
71% of counsellors perceive that teachers in government schools possess an average understanding of students' mental health issues, while 14% believe their comprehension is very poor, and another 14% rate it as very good. Qualitative insights from counsellor interactions reveal instances where teachers' perceptions about mental health exacerbate students' mental health challenges. This suggests a need for further training and support for educators to enhance their understanding of mental health issues

and ensure their responses positively contribute to students' well-being.

- **Mental health concerns observed among students in the MCGM schools.**

Anxiety and depression are reported in 57% of cases each, indicating a significant proportion of students experiencing these mental health challenges. Academic stress is identified as a concern in 71% of cases, underscoring the pressure students may face in their academic

Specific mental health concerns observed among students (N=7)



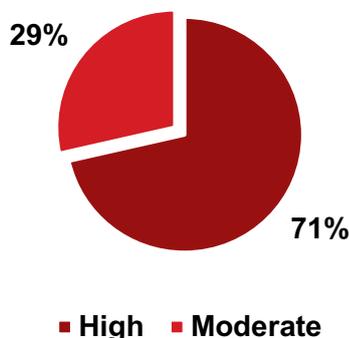
pursuits. Furthermore, behavioural stress is prevalent in 86% of cases, emphasising the importance of addressing behavioural issues to support students' overall well-being. Additionally, family issues are reported as a concern for 100% of cases, highlighting the impact of familial dynamics on students' mental health within the school context.

"I've had the privilege of witnessing a remarkable transformation in a young girl who initially maintained a quiet demeanour and hardly engaged with others. Residing with her cousins following her mother's absence, she embarked on a profound emotional journey, catalysed by our discussions surrounding her mother's passing. During these sessions, she bravely disclosed her inner struggles, confronting unresolved anger and a profound sense of resentment towards her mother's death. Through her willingness to delve into these complex emotions, including grief and feelings of abandonment, she showcases remarkable resilience and determination. As her counsellor, my commitment lies in providing unwavering support and guidance, empowering her to navigate through her grief and embrace a positive path forward in life."

~Counsellor - Mpower

• **Counsellor's perspective on the level of student engagement**

Counsellor's view on student engagement in therapy seeking (N=7)



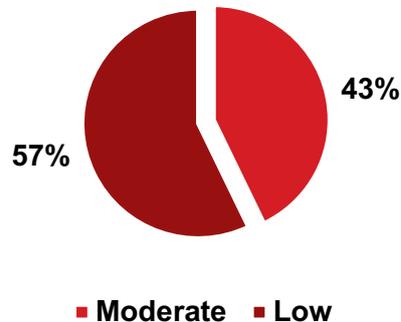
71% of counsellors perceive a high level of student engagement in the counselling process, indicating active involvement and participation from students. Conversely, 29% of counsellors believe that student engagement in the counselling process is moderate. These findings suggest a generally positive trend of student involvement in counselling activities, which is crucial for the effectiveness of mental health interventions. However, the presence of a minority who perceive moderate engagement highlights the importance of continuously striving to

enhance student participation and investment in their mental health journey.

- **Counsellor's perspective on the level of parent engagement**

57% of counsellors perceive a low level of parental engagement in addressing their children's mental health issues, indicating a lack of active involvement from parents in supporting their children's mental well-being. Conversely, 43% of counsellors believe there is a moderate level of engagement from parents. These results highlight a mixed picture regarding parental involvement in addressing mental health concerns among students.

Counsellor's view on parental involvement in child mental health issues (N=7)



While a significant portion of counsellors perceive insufficient parental engagement, the presence of a minority who observe moderate engagement suggests some level of parental awareness and willingness to address their child's mental health needs.

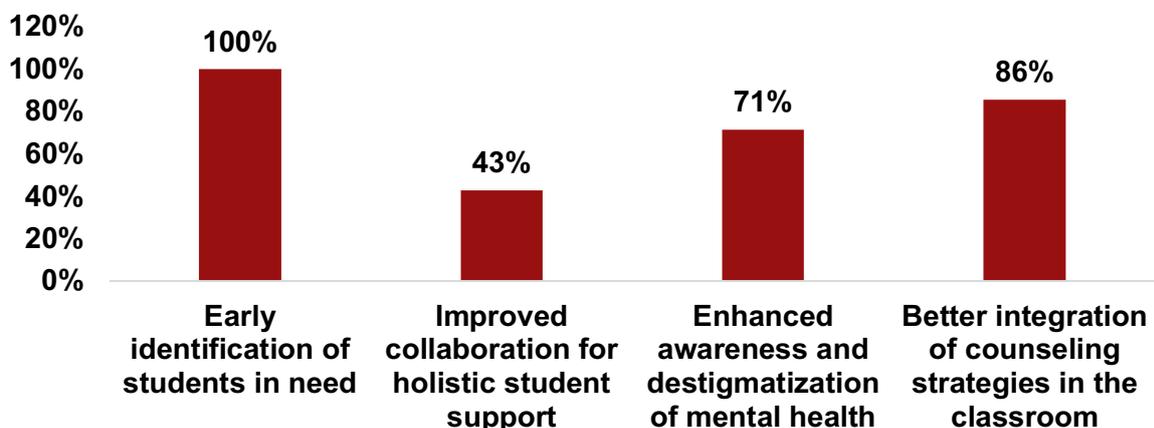
“During our counselling session, a student expressed identifying as a girl and showcased exceptional talent in drawing, henna art, and rangoli making. Despite receiving support and consolation from friends, family, and teachers regarding his gender identity, he struggled to fully accept himself. After our session, it became evident that he had come to terms with his identity and felt empowered to embrace it. Moving forward, he expressed a desire for recognition and appreciation for his skills, rather than facing ridicule or teasing. It is heartening to witness his newfound confidence and well-being as he continues to thrive.”

~Counsellor - Mpower

- **Benefits of teacher involvement in promoting mental health**

100% of counsellors recognise the importance of early identification of students in need, indicating that teacher involvement facilitates timely intervention and support for students experiencing mental health challenges. Additionally, 86% of counsellors acknowledge the

Benefits of teachers' involvement in mental health counselling (N=7)

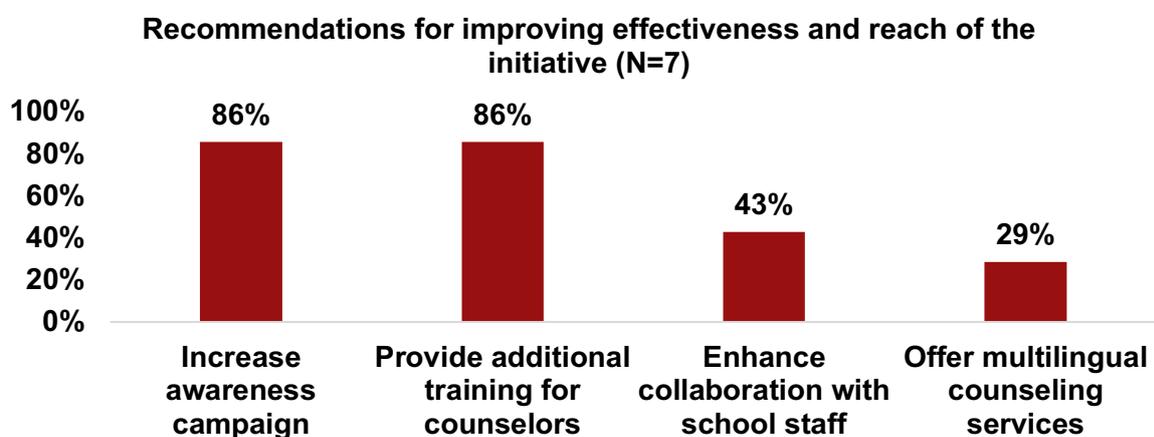


significance of better integrating counselling strategies in the classroom, suggesting that teacher collaboration enhances the delivery of mental health support within the educational setting. Furthermore, 71% of counsellors highlight the role of teacher involvement in enhancing awareness and destigmatisation of mental health issues, underscoring the potential for educators to contribute to a supportive and inclusive school environment. However, the relatively lower percentage (43%) acknowledging improved collaboration for holistic student support suggests areas for further enhancement in leveraging teacher involvement to address students' comprehensive well-being needs.

“In my sessions with a troubled student who had run away from home and struggled with emotional turmoil upon returning, I witnessed a remarkable transformation. Initially distraught and prone to conflict, he exhibited signs of distress that seemed insurmountable. Through counselling, I encouraged him to express his aspirations by drawing a picture of his dream for the future, which he depicted as a soldier. Subsequently, I prompted him to illustrate his current state, leading to a realisation of his behavioural issues. Empowered by this introspection, he embarked on a journey of self-improvement, demonstrating notable progress both academically and personally. This testimonial underscores the profound impact of counselling interventions in fostering positive change and resilience in students facing adversity.”

~Counsellor - Mpower

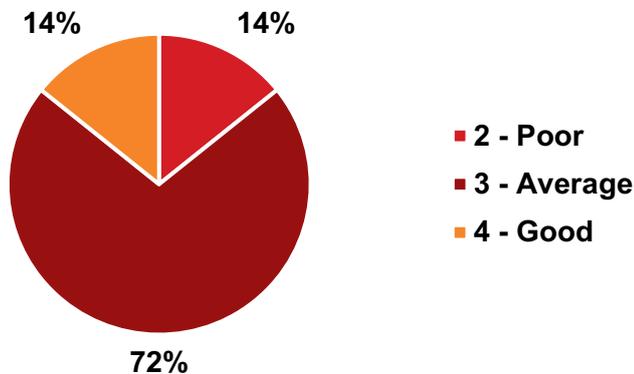
- Recommendation for improving mental health support in the school.



86% of counsellors advocate for increasing awareness campaigns, suggesting the importance of disseminating information and promoting understanding of mental health issues among students, staff, and parents. Additionally, an equal proportion of counsellors (86%) endorse providing additional training for counsellors, emphasising the significance of continuous professional development to enhance counselling efficacy and effectiveness. However, only 43% of counsellors recommend enhancing collaboration with school staff, indicating potential opportunities for improving teamwork and coordination in delivering holistic student support. Furthermore, the suggestion to offer multilingual counselling services, advocated by 29% of counsellors, underscores the importance of addressing linguistic diversity to ensure equitable access to mental health resources.

- **Counsellor rating of approach of government schools to address mental health.**

Counsellor rating: overall approach to mental health in government schools (N=7)



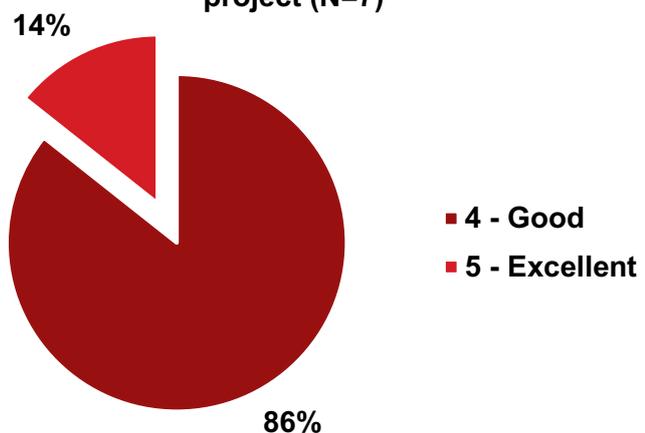
71%, rated the approach as average (3), indicating a perceived room for improvement in current practices. Additionally, 14% of counsellors rated the approach as poor (2), suggesting shortcomings in the existing strategies employed by government schools. However, 14% of counsellors rated the approach as good (4), indicating some level of effectiveness in certain aspects. These findings underscore the need for

comprehensive reforms and interventions to enhance mental health support systems within government schools, addressing identified weaknesses and building upon existing strengths to better meet the needs of students.

- **Impact rating**

The majority of counsellors, comprising 86%, rated the impact of the project as good (4) on a scale of 1 to 5. Additionally, 14% of counsellors rated the impact as excellent (5). These ratings suggest a generally positive perception of the project's effectiveness in addressing mental health concerns among students. However, there remains room for improvement to further enhance the impact and efficacy of the project, particularly in areas identified by counsellors for potential enhancement or expansion.

Counsellor's rating on the impact of the project (N=7)





Chapter 4:

**Recommendations
and way forward**

Chapter 4: Recommendations

- **Increase Awareness Campaigns:** Implement robust awareness campaigns targeting students, parents, and school staff to promote understanding and destigmatisation of mental health issues.
- **Provide Additional Training for Counsellors:** Offer continuous professional development opportunities and specialised training programs for counsellors to enhance their skills and competencies in addressing diverse mental health concerns.
- **Enhance Collaboration with School Staff:** Strengthen collaboration and communication channels between counsellors, teachers, and administrative staff to ensure a holistic and coordinated approach to student support services.
- **Implement Early Identification Measures:** Develop and implement strategies for early identification and intervention of students experiencing mental health challenges to provide timely support and prevent escalation of issues.
- **Foster Parental Engagement:** Promote parental involvement in addressing their child's mental health needs through targeted outreach efforts, workshops, and support groups to create a supportive home environment.



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