



Skill in Village Program Assessment Study **for Deshpande Foundation**

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Executive Summary

Skill in Village (SiV) is a skilling program conceptualised by Deshpande Foundation to support rural students in Karnataka and Telangana. The program focuses on using English language skill as a way to develop life skills with an aim to improve the employability by equipping the students with 21st century skills.

This report presents the findings from the impact study conducted by ConveGenius Insights and Learning Curves Foundation. It aims to evaluate learning outcomes in English language proficiency and Life Skills competencies of students of grade 7,8,9 and 10. The study was conducted through a mixed-method of qualitative and quantitative modes of data collection and analysis. The three main data collection methods used were – self-report tools for student assessments, survey and Focused group Discussion.

A two-level cluster sampling method was used in this evaluation study. First, clusters were sampled, and then, schools were further sampled using Probability proportional to size (PPS) within the sampled clusters.

The self-report tools used were customized tools developed to understand the learning levels of students. Three tools were used for testing students' learning levels. One testing the English language proficiency, the second testing Critical thinking, and the third testing life skill competencies. The self-report tools for students were self-marked on paper under enumeration. The same set of tools were used for both SiV and Non SiV students. The next set of tools administered were surveys developed separately for trainers, teachers, parents, school leaders and district officials only in the experimental group to understand their perspectives on the program. The surveys were administered through an online medium for teachers, trainers, school leaders and district officials while student and parent surveys were self-reported on paper. The next tool used were focus group discussions administered with students, trainers, parents and district officials only in the experimental group of the study.

The total number of students assessed stood at 2,046. The total number of SiV students assessed in English/Analytical and Critical thinking and Life Skills stood at 960 while a total of 1,086 Non-SiV students were assessed in English/Analytical and Critical Thinking and Life Skills.

The findings of the evaluation study were obtained from various analyses. For English proficiency levels, it was noted that the performance of SiV students in grade 7,9 and 10 was better than Non-SiV students. It was observed that to acquire grade level competencies, students of all grades require continuous remediation.

On analysing the life skill competency of the students, it was found that the program has significantly impacted grade 8, 9, 10 students' life skills than grade 7 students considering cluster level data analysis. Further, it was found that among middle school students (grade 7 & 8) there has been an improvement noticed in skills – self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making among students who attended the program for more than one year. In the case of high school students (grade 9 & 10) it was found there has been an improvement noticed in competencies – self-awareness and social awareness among students who attended the program for more than one year implying that the number of years of participation in the SiV program has a positive influence on developing life skills in students.

From the survey conducted with students and teachers, it was found that 30.3% students in Karnataka and 30.7% students in Telangana believe that post the program their English language skills have improved indicating that there is a connection between the ability to express in a language they consider important for pursuing higher education/better job opportunities and confidence levels. The findings from Focused Group Discussions show that students in the focus have been able to build a relationship of trust with their peers and with the trainer. Further they reported that the activity-based pedagogy being used makes learning joyful, engaging and gives opportunities to them to participate, express and discuss their ideas.

The study further discusses about aspects which have contributed to the effectiveness to the program. It was found that the program has been successful in terms of equipping children with life skills. The program has received positive response in receiving community support to trainers. The trainers have efficiently addressed challenges and have supported the students. Regular follow-up and inputs were taken from the parents and cordial relations were maintained with cluster heads. Trainers are self-motivated and have come up with creative ideas in implementing, resulting in interesting classes for students. Teachers customize the content based on the contextual learning experiences with which students make learning more effective as well as to cater to the students' learning levels.

Some improvement areas were addressed in this report. It was recommended that the program be structured to engage students in development of life skills. This can be done through age appropriate curriculum development which has inputs on life skills. The objectives of life modules need to be identified. Since the program has integrated English language with life skills, the life skills component needs to be given regular practice. A structured evaluation framework to assess life skills of students will be helpful to track changes in abilities and life skills of students continuously. A need to develop structured modules equipping teachers in delivering content on skill specific content to students will be helpful. Teacher workshops focusing exclusively dealing with strategies teachers can engage children in life skill development can also be administered. Along with it, practices on integrating English language content with life skills will help teachers to engage students in life skills development more regularly and efficiently.

This report also constitutes an analysis of SiV program objectives aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals (UNSDG) based on the overall program intervention, curriculum design and pedagogy. The detailed analysis can be found in [Annexure 5](#). It is an attempt to reflect the progress on SDGs using SiV impact indicators based on student learning outcomes in English language proficiency and life skills. It was found that the SiV goals are strongly aligned with UNSDG 4 - ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all as the program is centered on skill-based learning and literacy. The program's alignment particularly lies at the intersection of SDG 4.1 focused on universal access to primary and secondary education and SDG 4.4 focused on relevant skills for decent work. Overall, the program goals are aligned with SDGs that focus on upward social and economic mobility as outlined in the analysis above and presented in the economic and social dimensions. To explore further ways of alignment with UNSDGs, there is a need to explicitly identify access and quality for learning for disadvantaged gender groups such as girl students. It is recommended that a monitoring framework be developed along with project's theory of change and SDG indicators along each program and output.





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