

Final Impact Assessment Study Report

GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi

GAIL (India) Limited

March 2025

Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP



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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
BAMS	Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CSRL	Centre for Social Responsibility and Leadership
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EWS	Economically Weaker Section
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Financial Year
IDI	In-depth interview
IRECS	Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness & Efficiency, Convergence and Sustainability
JEE	Joint Entrance Examination
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
MMU	Mobile Medical Unit
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NEET	National Eligibility cum Entrance Test
OBC	Other Backward Class
PCM	Physics, Chemistry and Math
PSU	Public Sector Undertaking
PWCALLP	Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP
SC	Scheduled Castes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ST	Scheduled Tribes
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SSRP	School-to-School reach programme

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1. Executive Summary

About the project:

GAIL (India) Ltd (GAIL) is a Central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) that started its operations in 1984. It implements CSR projects across various sectors and is committed to conducting impact evaluations of its projects. One of these projects is the 'GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi,' which aims to enhance girl students' academic performance through residential coaching for engineering (JEE) and medical (NEET) college entrance exams. This project was implemented by the Centre for Social Responsibility and Leadership (CSRL) in 2021 with CSR funding support from GAIL.



GAIL engaged Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP) to conduct the impact assessment of this CSR project. **The scope of work included the desk review of the project, research tools development, field data collection and providing management with key findings and recommendations for their consideration.**



The impact assessment study utilised a **mixed method approach** (quantitative and qualitative). While the quantitative interactions were carried out with a survey sample of 33 girl students, team also carried out the qualitative interactions with various other project stakeholders such as GAIL Project Nodal Officer, CSRL Project Lead, Teacher / Administrative staff, Parents of students and Students.



Beneficiary Profile:

GAIL Utkarsh Varanasi centre only catered to female students, belonging to either Uttar Pradesh (67%) or Madhya Pradesh (33%) within the age group of 17 to 19 years. 52% of the respondents were from the Other Backward Class category, followed by Economically Weaker Section (24%), Scheduled Caste (18%), and Scheduled Tribe (6%). The respondents predominantly belonged to households with an annual income of less than INR 1,50,000 (94%).



Key Impact Findings:

Access to Free Quality Education:

- **100% responded said that they joined the centre to access the opportunity of free coaching facilities**, while 61% joined for the quality of teaching and the offered curriculum.
- **All respondents felt that the coaching facility reduced the financial burden for their families and 91% believing that it provided them an opportunity for socio-economic upliftment.**
- Respondents stated that in case the coaching was unavailable, they would have had to explore other options such as online coaching, self-study, or apply for other coaching which might not have yielded the same results for them.

Access to a Holistic Learning Environment:

- **85% respondents stated that a residential coaching facility provided them with an environment that improved their focus on studies.**
- **All respondents agreed that the residential facility led to peer learning, while 70% respondents quoted that the centre also provides an avenue to engage in co-curricular activities such as playing games, etc.**
- Respondents felt that additional sessions, meetings, and events helped them learn new techniques to improve study efficiency (time management, stress management, etc.), aided in personal growth, and provided exposure to available market opportunities.

Opportunity of Becoming Changemakers:

- Approximately one-fifth of the respondents mentioned that their parents had initial apprehension in sending them to the centre. However, once the student joined, majority respondents felt **their parents were proud of their academic progress at the centre.**
- 100% respondents are actively involved in at least one community support activity and raising awareness regarding the GAIL Utkarsh Super 60 project among friends, family, and schools in their village.



Recommendations:



- Team noted the need of enhancing **the overall student experience by increasing the frequency of toilet cleaning, reducing the number of girls in one dormitory, and improving the management of meals.**
- Students who lacked a strong grasp of the concepts taught in their 11th and 12th-grade coursework found it challenging to keep up with the coaching. To address these issues, an **additional team of faculty could assist students, providing support to the main faculty by conducting doubt-clearing sessions and extra classes** when necessary.
- Given that the centre is exclusively for girls, **gender sensitisation trainings are particularly important in such courses** which will help the faculty and staff to improve their interactions with the students.





2. Introduction

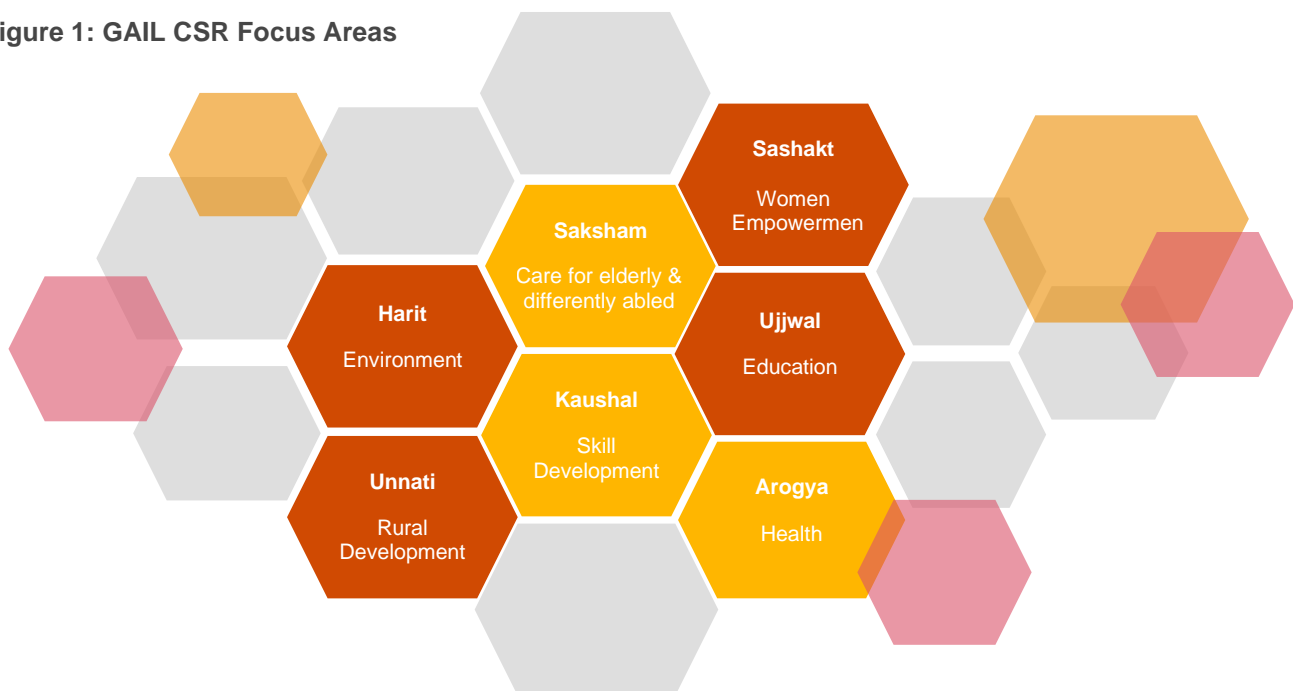
1.1. CSR at GAIL (India) Limited

GAIL (India) Ltd (GAIL) started its operations as a **Central Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** in 1984. It was established under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. It is India's leading natural gas company with ownership and network of over 15,500 kms of natural gas pipelines across the country. It holds **~70% market share in gas transmission** and **accounts for over ~ 50% of gas trading** in India.¹

In line with the company's vision, GAIL continues to enhance value creation in the society and in the communities in which it operates. The company aims to fulfil its role as a socially responsible corporate entity with environmental concerns with an objective to promote sustained growth for the society and the community.² The goal is to ensure an increased commitment at all levels in the organisation to operate business in an economically, socially & environmentally sustainable manner, while recognising the interests of all its stakeholders.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects at GAIL encompass a wide range of welfare and developmental activities that extend across various focus areas, primarily conducted in and around its business operations. The company has identified **seven focus areas** which remain at the heart of all GAIL's CSR projects and have been appropriately termed as '**GAIL Hriday**', as depicted in the figure below.³

Figure 1: GAIL CSR Focus Areas



1.2. About the Project

1.2.1. Context

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education is crucial for India's workforce. However, pursuing higher education in this field often requires students to take competitive entrance exams such as the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for engineering or the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical courses. As a result, aspirants seek support from external coaching facilities during exam preparations which presents significant challenges for students from economically weaker households. Amidst these challenges, various initiatives and opportunities have emerged to support and empower underprivileged students through financial assistance, coaching, and study materials.

¹ <https://www.gailonline.com/ABGailstory.html>

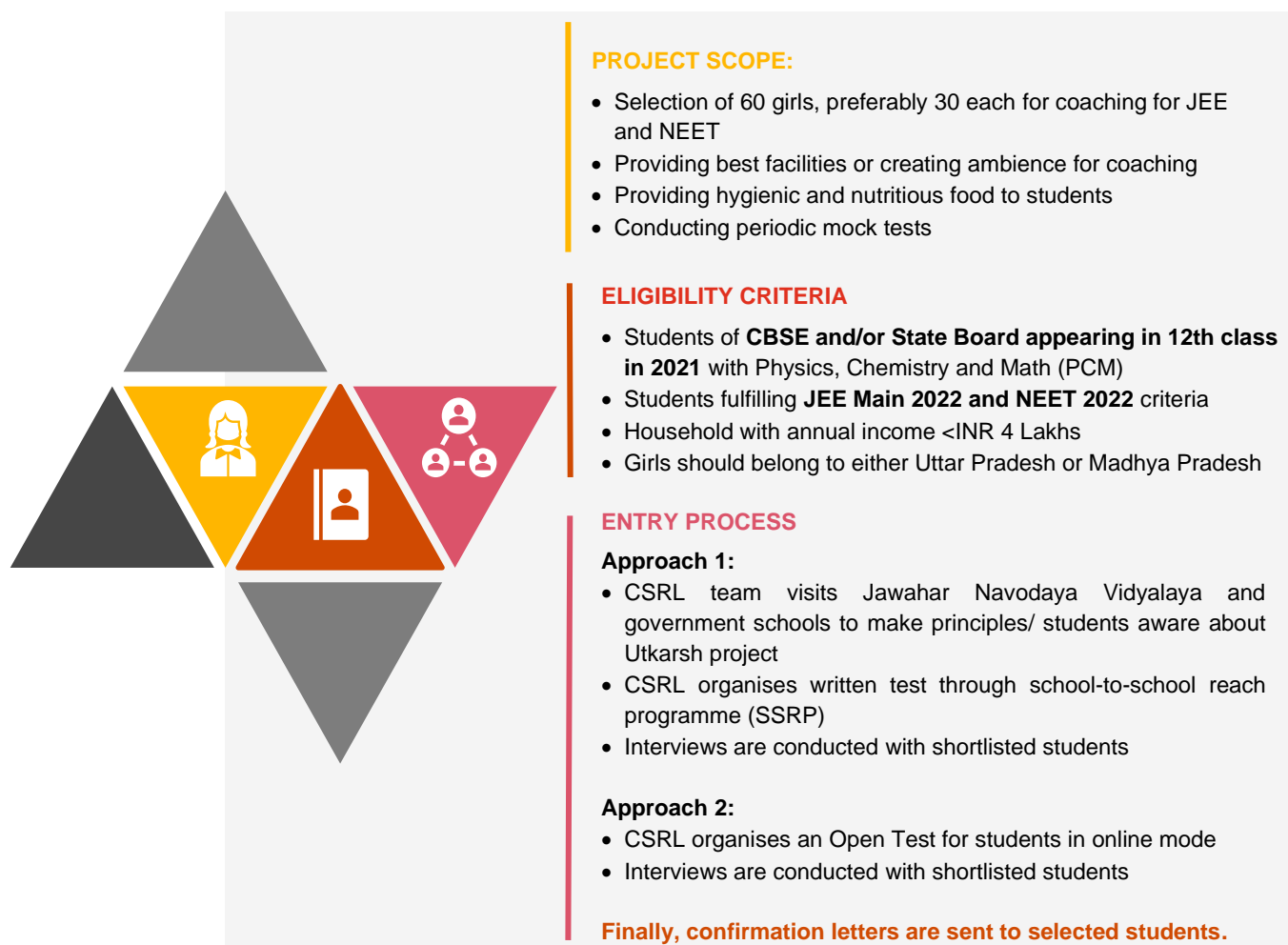
² <https://www.gailonline.com/CSRPolicy.html>

³ <https://www.gailonline.com/CSRHriday.html>



'GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi' is a part of GAIL's flagship Utkarsh projects, which aim to transform the lives of students by enhancing their academic performance through **residential coaching and preparing them for engineering (JEE) and medical (NEET) college entrance examinations**. This project was conceptualised and implemented by the **Centre for Social Responsibility and Leadership (CSRL)** in 2021 with the CSR funding support from GAIL. Below figure provides a Bird's-eye view of GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi project:⁴

Figure 2: Project Specifics for GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi



The impact assessment study will focus on the **academic year 2021-22** for GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi. The total funding for this project period by GAIL is **INR 2 Crores. 90% of the students qualified JEE Mains, out of which 36% cleared the JEE Advanced examination. 97% students qualified in NEET 2022.**⁵

1.2.2. About the Implementing Partner

Centre for Social Responsibility and Leadership (CSRL) was established in the year 2007 with an aim to promote social upliftment through educational projects. CSRL is a registered society that primarily operates in the education and leadership sector. The organisation has been actively involved in providing coaching to **underprivileged children of the society through its various SUPER 30 projects** across India.⁶

⁴ Information provided as per project progress reports shared by GAIL.

⁵ Information as per project progress report. The information has not been validated by the PW team.

⁶ <https://www.csrl.in/about-csr-in-india>





2. Approach and Methodology

2.1. Purpose and Scope of the Study

GAIL (India) Limited (GAIL) engaged Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP) to conduct an impact assessment of its CSR projects. The study aims to assess the overall impact on the community with an objective to bring transparency and provide management with the feedback and recommendations to improve the delivery processes of the CSR projects at GAIL.

2.2. Detailed Methodology

The impact assessment study utilised an **integrated and cohesive approach** (as depicted in below Figure) which enabled the research team to evaluate the impact of the project on the lives of the beneficiaries:

Figure 3 : Step-by-step Approach for Assessing the Impact of the CSR project



Step 1: Engagement kick-off and desk review

The impact assessment began with a kick-off meeting with the project team from GAIL to discuss the overall scope of work, gain a detailed understanding of the projects and further, align on the expectations of the GAIL from the assessment. Following the meeting, PW team prepared and shared a list of documents required for initiating the impact assessment. Once the documents were received from GAIL, the team initiated the desk review of the documents. Following documents were received from GAIL to initiate the desk review:

- MoA with the implementing agency
- Project- specific progress reports

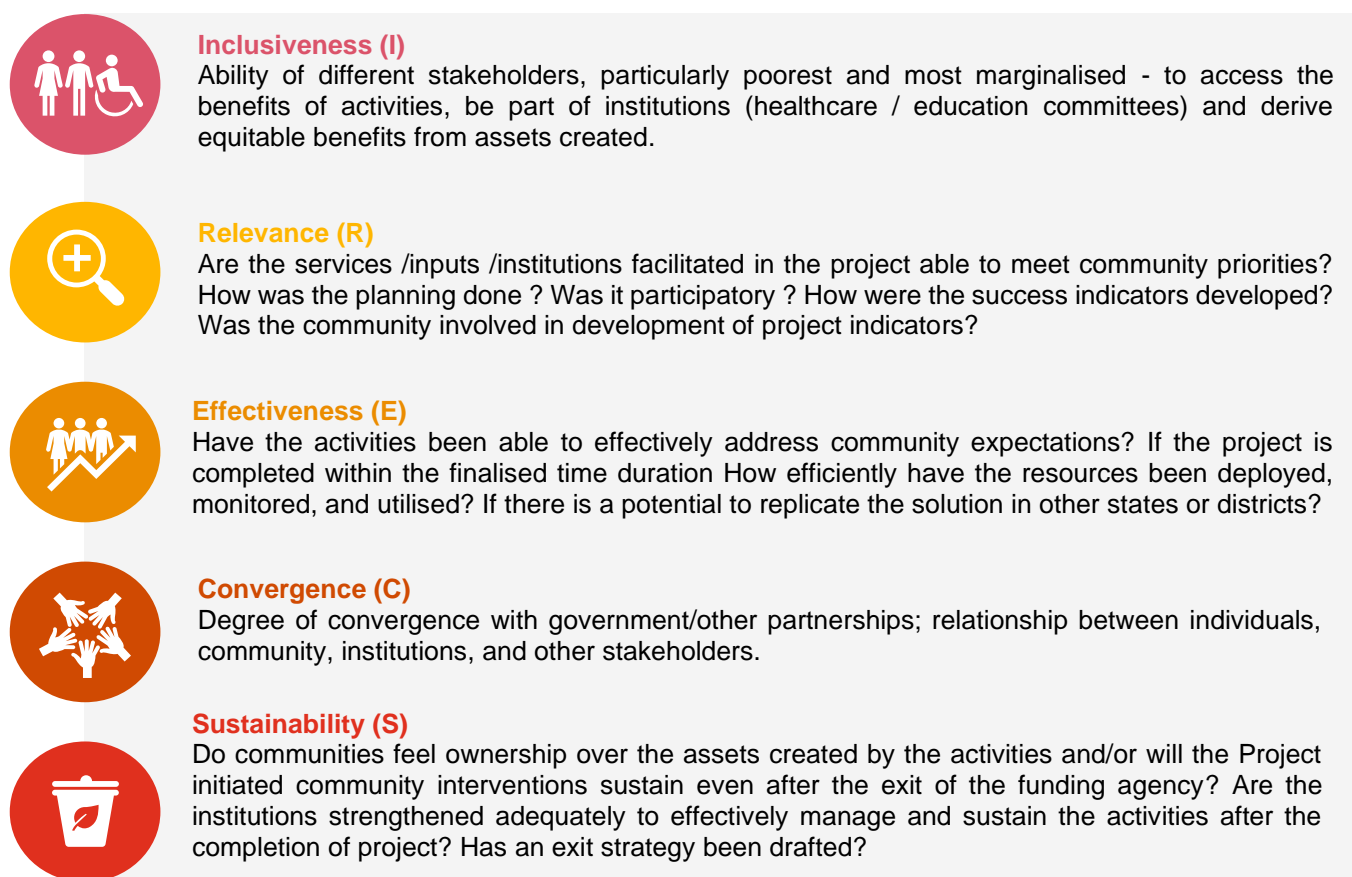
Step 2: Research design and tool development

Team reviewed and understood the monitoring and implementation processes for this CSR project. The impact assessment study was guided by the **IRECS assessment framework** which was used to provide overall feedback on the efficacy of implementation as well, as its efficiency in terms of achievement of the desired project outputs with reference to inputs (refer Figure 4).

Post finalising the assessment framework in consultation with GAIL team, PW team initiated the mapping of the stakeholders for this CSR project and drawn the sample size for the purpose of impact assessment. Key stakeholders were identified for the project to undertake the quantitative and qualitative interactions with the related stakeholders.



Figure 4: IRECS Assessment Framework



Basis the review of the projects, each project has been assessed on the above key parameters and further categorised into High/ Medium/ Low basis the impact generated:

Table 1: Description of Categories for Bifurcating Projects based on their Impact Generated

Colour Code	Rating Categories	Description
Green	High	This category highlights that the project has been able to meet the key evaluation parameters of impact within the said IRECS framework.
Yellow	Medium	This category highlights that the project has been able to partially meet the key evaluation parameters of impact within the said IRECS framework.
Red	Low	This category highlights that the project has yet to meet the key evaluation parameters of impact within the said IRECS framework.

After mapping key stakeholder groups in consultation with the GAIL team, the team started developing the research tools for data collection. The assessment for 'GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi' project adopted the **mixed method approach (mix of quantitative and qualitative research)**. For the quantitative interactions, the sample size was calculated keeping in mind statistical measures to draw inferences from the sample that could be extrapolated for the larger universe of beneficiaries.

The **Cochran's Formula** was used to calculate the sample size for quantitative interactions. The formula is mentioned below:



$$n' = n/1 + \{[z^2 * p(1-p)]/m^2 * N\}$$

n' = sample

Z = z score depending on Confidence Interval (in this case CI = 90% and z = 1.96)

$n = z^2 * p(1-p)/m^2$

N = population size (depending on individual projects as obtained from each project MOA)

M = margin of error (10%)

p = population proportion (considered as 50%,0.5)

The below table indicates the sample size of quantitative research and stakeholders mapped for the qualitative interactions for this CSR project:

Table 2: Mapping of Qualitative and Quantitative Interactions for GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi Project

Quantitative Sample			Qualitative Sample		
Universe Size (beneficiaries)	Sample Size for Quantitative Research	Mode of Quantitative Research	Stakeholders Covered under Qualitative interactions		Mode of Qualitative Research
62 students	33 Students	Virtual survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GAIL Project Nodal Officer CSRL Project Lead Teacher / Administrative staff at Varanasi Centre Parents of students Students who Qualified JEE Mains/ NEET Students who did not Qualify JEE Mains/ NEET 	1 1 2 3 3 3	Virtual in-depth interviews (IDIs)

The team conducted qualitative interviews with students to gain insights into their experiences following their participation in the GAIL Utkarsh project. The purpose was to ascertain whether they successfully enrolled in college and adapted well to their new environment, or if they chose to pursue different academic paths.

Step 3: Data collection & data cleaning

PW team also ensured sensitising the implementing agency, CSRL and GAIL project team on the requirements from impact assessment study. Post finalisation of the data collection plan, the research team from PW was oriented on the research tools (quantitative and qualitative) and dos and don'ts during data collection. Once the quantitative and qualitative data was collected virtually, data entry and cleaning were carried out.

Step 4: Data analysis & report submission

After the data entry and data cleaning, the analysis was carried out to arrive at the insightful and overarching findings for this project. The draft report was prepared accordingly and shared with GAIL for review and inputs. PW submitted the final report to GAIL for management's consideration post incorporating the inputs received from the team.





3. Programmatic Findings

3.1. Analysis of Collected Data for the Impact Assessment

3.1.1. Beneficiary Profile



This section discusses the key findings emerged from interactions carried out with 33 students (N=33) to understand the impact for this CSR project. The sample was further distributed based on the choice of entrance examination. 17 students from the sample had qualified NEET, and 16 students had taken the JEE Advanced entrance examination. Below provides an overview of beneficiary profile:



GAIL Utkarsh Varanasi centre only **catered to female students**. The respondents belonged to Uttar Pradesh (67%), or Madhya Pradesh (33%) as specified in the eligibility criteria of the project.



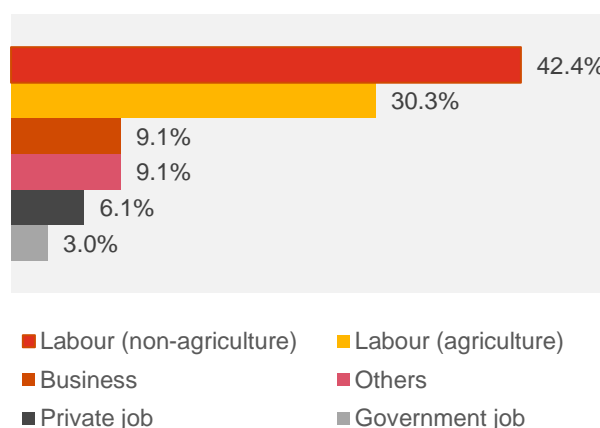
These respondents were **within the age group of 17 to 19 years** at the time of joining the centre (~27% were 17 years old, ~52% were 18 years old, and ~21% were 19 years old).



52% of the respondents were from the Other Backward Class category, followed by Economically Weaker Section (24%), Scheduled Caste (18%), and Scheduled Tribe (6%).

- Further, the **primary occupation of the family was non-agricultural labour work (42.4%)**, followed by agricultural labour work (30.3%) (refer Figure 5).
- Respondents predominantly belonged to households with an annual income of less than INR 1,50,000/- (94%). On analysing the information further, team further noted that 33% belonged to households with less than INR 50,000/- of annual income. However, **all respondents had an annual household income of less than INR 4,00,000/- as per the set eligibility criteria.**
- It was noted that this annual income catered to 4 to 6 family members in a household (85% respondents). 9% of the total respondents indicated having 7 to 9 members in their households, while **rest 6% respondents were falling either in the category of 'household with 3 members or less' or 'household with 10 members or more'**.

Figure 5: Primary Occupation of Respondent Household, N=33



Respondents (N=33) scored an average of 89% in 12th Class at the Varanasi Centre



100% respondents (N=33) at the centre were aware of GAIL as the funding partner



JEE Aspirants: Out of the 16 respondents attempting JEE entrance exams at the Varanasi centre, 44% had cleared JEE Advanced.



67% (N=33) respondents joined through SSRP, 18% got to know of the project from social media, etc. and 15% through friends/ family



85% respondents got to know of GAIL through CSRL, 9% got to know from hoarding/ branding materials, and 6% from other sources

NEET Aspirants: Out of the respondents, (N=17), 35% took admission after appearing for NEET in 2022, 24% dropped a year and got admissions (MBBS/ other healthcare courses), while 41% are still appearing for the exam seeking a college of their choice.



3.1.2. Summary of the Impact by the Project

• Access to Free of Cost Quality Education



GAIL provides mentorship from senior management, while allowing CSRL the freedom to execute the project effectively. GAIL Utkarsh Super 60 Project at the Varanasi centre offers **free coaching facilities to students**. Experienced **teaching faculty are selected through a set process** at the centre, and the **curriculum is developed and updated regularly by the academic team of CSRL to ensure positive outcomes for the students**.



79% found the selection process moderately difficult, while 12% considered it to be difficult to qualify. Only 9% stated that it was easy. However, **67% of respondents only needed to review their regular coursework from school to qualify for the selection process**, while 30% stated that they did not need to do any additional studying. Only 3% responded that they needed to learn new concepts to prepare for the examinations (N=33).

▶ **On probing the reason to join the course, 100% responded said that they had the opportunity to access coaching facilities for free.** 61% joined because of the quality of teaching and the curriculum offered, and 55% valued the experience of learning outside of their homes. This was further explained by another 6% of the respondents, who felt that there would be less distractions in a residential course with a dedicated facility for coaching (refer Figure 6).⁷

▶ The coaching was important for the students for several reasons. They are listed as follows:

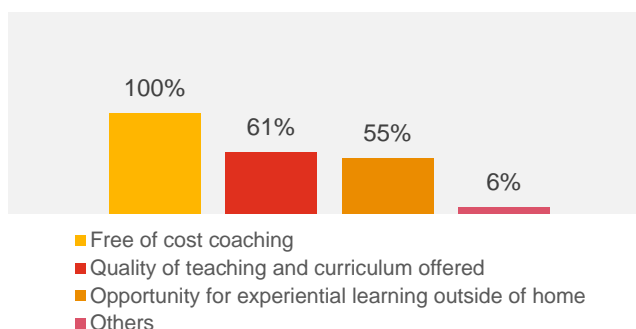
- **100% respondents felt that the GAIL coaching facility reduced the financial burden for their families.**
- **91% believed that it provided an opportunity for socio-economic upliftment,** and
- **45% agreed that it gave them access to quality teaching/ learning** (refer Figure 7).⁸

▶ Respondents stated that they would have had to explore other options such as online coaching, self-study, or apply for other coaching which might not have yielded the same results for them. In some cases, they also agreed that they **would have had to turn to other offline coaching facilities which would have costed more than INR 1,00,000/-**.

Additionally, some respondents stated that **without the coaching, they would not have opted for a competitive stream such as engineering, and medical and would have changed their line of study.**

88% of respondents felt that **they fared well in entrance exams owing to regular testing and feedback** while 82% **cited the course curriculum**. 73% felt that the **doubt-solving sessions, regular classes (55%), and teaching pedagogies (52%) also contributed to the success**. On a scale of 1 to 3, the respondents rated the **teaching pedagogies at 2.53** (on an average) whereas **curriculum was rated 2.67**.

Figure 6: Reasons for Joining the Coaching Facility, N=33 (Multiple coding)



⁷ N=33, Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.

⁸ Ibid.



Case Story 1



My daughter's admission to the GAIL Utkarsh Super 60 project in Varanasi for competitive examinations came to us as a surprise. Considering our financial background, I initially hesitated to support her decision. However, after thorough research and speaking with alumni, I was convinced with this incredible opportunity for her. The institute's top-notch faculty and invaluable exposure at no cost made it a once-in-a-lifetime chance for her to receive a high-quality education. I made all efforts to ensure that she could attend the coaching, and I took a loan from friends and family to book her travel to the Varanasi centre.

- Parent of a Student, GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi

Respondents have suggested that to improve the rate of qualified students in entrance examinations, teachers should focus more on practical or mock exams ahead of the entrance examinations (67%). While the doubt sessions are helpful, respondents feel that targeted doubt sessions catering to specific topics would be even more relevant (64%). They also recommended that **teachers should incorporate real-life examples and case studies into the curriculum**. Additionally, they believed that having additional teachers for the number of children in a batch would be useful (45%, N=33). These **can be considered for improvement** within the execution of the project in case GAIL intends to replicate it in the future. Additionally, the faculty proposed the potential benefit of employing two distinct groups of faculties within the centre. The second group would be junior faculty, in **addition to regular teaching faculty who would be dedicated to resolving queries of students**.

Respondents reported facing common challenges, including the educational gap experienced by them if they attended regional or Hindi medium schools. This made it difficult for them to understand English STEM terminology. Another challenge was the inadequate foundational knowledge of respondents in their school curriculum, which serves as the basis for competitive higher education examinations. This lack of foundational knowledge is particularly noticeable in students from academic batches during COVID-19, as they found themselves adapting to new teaching methodologies and online classes.

• Access to a Holistic Learning Environment



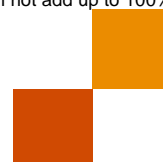
GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi provides free residential facilities to students with a holistic learning environment. The facility offers in-house faculty and staff available 24/7 to support students academically and emotionally. Each student is allocated a dormitory with a cot, mattress, bed sheets, and basic supplies. Additionally, students have access to shared washroom facilities, three meals a day, a dining hall, well-equipped smart classrooms, and personalized computer labs. In case of minor medical issues, the students are also provided free healthcare support.



The project promotes peer learning, provides digital media for virtual learning, as well as test materials to push students out of their comfort zones, enhancing their capabilities for greater success. Additionally, students receive counselling on soft skills, stress management, time management, and guidance on future career paths. They also benefit from networking opportunities with professionals and college students through alumni workshops which are being organised by CSRL on regular basis depending on the availability of alumni group.

100% respondents found their experience at the residential facility to be either excellent or average. They rated the overall amenities at the centre as 2.64 (on a scale of 1 to 3). When asked about what they liked at the centre, 100% respondents stated that it was the safety and security, followed by 82% mentioning classrooms, 76% mentioning dormitories, and 65% mentioning computer labs, and so on (refer Figure 7).⁹

⁹ N=17, only asked to select respondents who rated the facility as excellent. Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.



▶ “Our impact is tangible and time-bound” said a CSRL official. **During interviews, multiple stakeholders emphasised that GAIL Utkarsh Super 60 project stands out from others due to its residential facility, which fosters academic discipline among students.** Overall, 85% respondents stated that a residential coaching facility provided them with an environment that improved their focus on their studies. 39% agreed that it helped develop their soft skills, and 3% felt that while meals could be improved, they helped maintain their health with adequate nutrition required in their diet.¹⁰

▶ **The coaching at the Varanasi centre for students goes beyond academics.** According to respondents, in addition to personal development counselling sessions (52%) and alumni meetings (24%), they also engage in activities such as playing games, and celebrating festivals, and events such as new year’s eve, etc. (70%) (refer Figure 8).¹¹ Respondents felt that these additional sessions, meetings, and events helped them learn new techniques to improve study efficiency (time management, stress management, etc.), aided in personal growth, and provided exposure to available market opportunities.

Figure 7: Facilities Liked by the Respondents at the Centre, N=17 (Multiple coding)

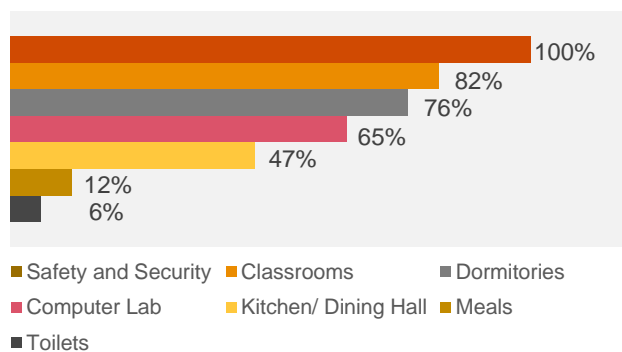
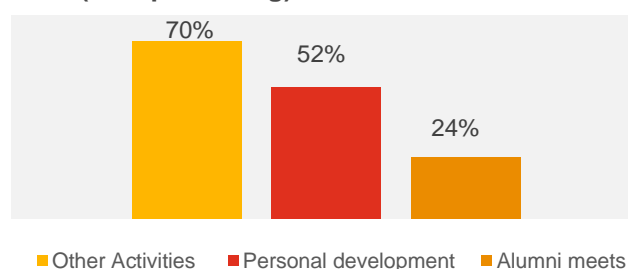
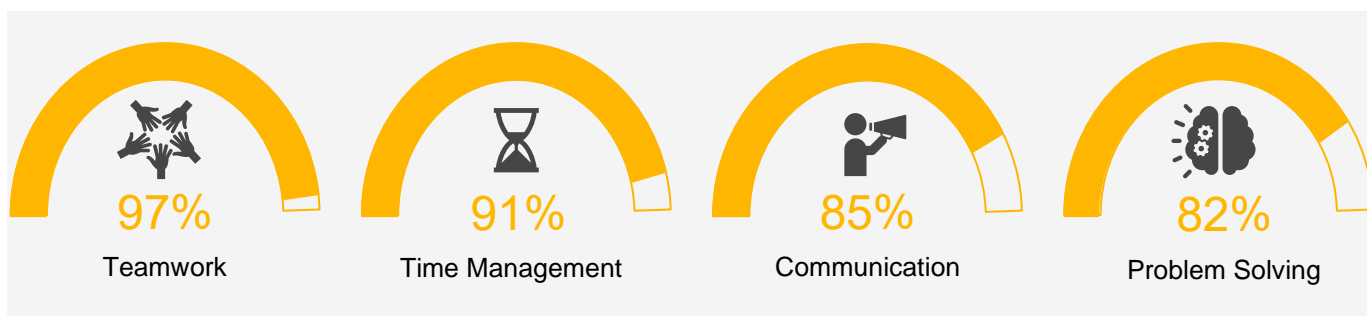


Figure 8: Events Held Beyond Academic Classes, N=33 (Multiple coding)



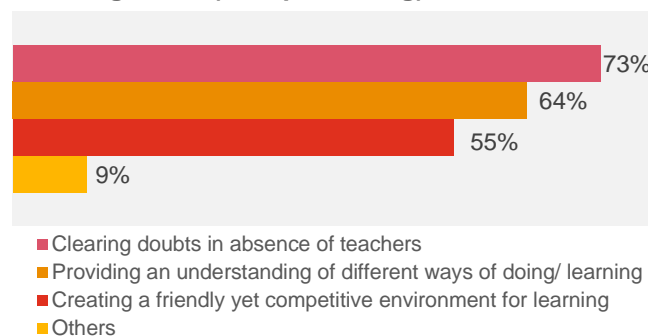
Percentage of respondents who reported an improvement in the following top 4 soft skills:



On the contrary, soft skills least developed by respondents included leadership and critical thinking.

▶ **100% respondents agreed that the residential facility led to peer learning.** 73% respondents indicated that it helped them in clearing doubts in absence of teachers. For 64% respondents, it provided an insight on different methods of learning, and for 55% respondents, it helped create a friendly yet competitive environment for learning (refer Figure 9).¹²

Figure 9: Support to Respondents from Peer Learning, N=33 (Multiple coding)



¹⁰ N=33, Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.



Case Story 2



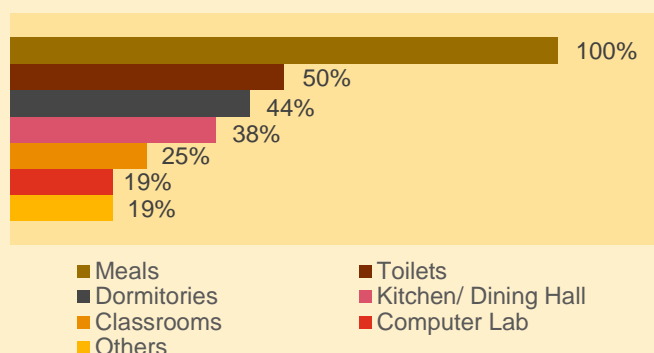
When students enrol at the centre, they often face challenges in communicating with teachers and peers. For example, Kriti (name changed) was extremely shy and found it difficult to ask questions during classes. However, with time and mutual effort, she was able to overcome her shyness. By the end of the project, her confidence had grown significantly. Not only did she improve academically, but she also felt more prepared for college life. It's fantastic to hear that she was accepted into an MBBS program at a prestigious government college.

- Faculty at GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi

When asked what they would like to improve in the residential facility, 100% of the respondents suggested that the meals could be better. 50% wanted an improvement in the toilet facilities with a focus on more hygiene, while 44% suggested the need for improved dormitories. Respondents also called out other requirements at the centre, such as a dedicated medical room (refer Figure 10).¹³

Additionally, while faculty was provided with training on course curriculum, teaching pedagogies and more, there were no training specific to gender sensitisation, given that the Varanasi centre was only for female students.

Figure 10: Areas of Improvement in the Residential Facility, N=16 (Multiple coding)



• Opportunity of Becoming Changemakers



Parents were although apprehensive to send their child to the centre, but they realised the importance of this opportunity to access free quality coaching at the GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi centre. Respondents agreed that their selection into a premiere college is the key to their socio-economic upliftment and can change the course of life for their entire family. "The coaching for an individual can have a significant impact on the entire family of the student when they eventually join a top-tier institute," said the GAIL Project Nodal Officer.



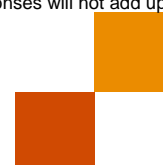
The interactions with respondents highlighted the transformative impact of receiving coaching and gaining access to a leading higher education institute. This empowerment enabled them to serve as ambassadors for promoting the values of hard work and education within their community. Furthermore, the respondents expressed a strong sense of duty to give back to society through projects like the GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, particularly once they commence earning from their placements.

Pride Among Parents:

21% of respondents mentioned that their parents initially had concerns about sending them to the centre. It took some time for their parents to feel comfortable with the decision to enrol them in the GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi centre. The main reasons for their concerns were safety (86%), the distance of the centre from home (79%), and the young age of the child (43%). Additional reasons for the scepticism included the centre's new location and doubts about its ability to produce results like other GAIL-sponsored CSRL centres.¹⁴

¹³ N=16, only asked to select respondents who rated the facility as average or below. Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.

¹⁴ N=7, only asked to select respondents who rated the facility as average or below. Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.



CSRL ensured parental buy-in by offering counselling (if needed) and allowing parents to visit the centre before classes commenced to check the facilities and arrangements for their child. GAIL Project Nodal Officer stated that, "We were worried about the apprehension of parents in sending girl children to a residential facility for coaching, however, that did not pose as a challenge at the Varanasi centre."

When asked about their parents' feelings upon joining the coaching, **91% of respondents said their parents were proud of their academic progress at the centre.** 48% of respondents mentioned that their parents had a feeling of satisfaction with the safety and quality of teachers. Additionally, 30% agreed that their parents were proud to see them managing well on their own.¹⁵ One respondent added, "After visiting the centre and speaking to ex-alum from CSRL centres my father was proud to see that I had secured a place at such a facility. He was proud of my achievements, and the decision to join the coaching."

Case Story 3



In one of the early batches of a GAIL CSRL centre, a student qualified the JEE Advanced examinations and secured a position in IIT Roorkee. His family was overjoyed with his success but could not afford to fill the registration fee of the college. The student's father was an auto-driver. He sold his autorickshaw to fill the required fee and sent his child to college. After many years when we enquired about their son, we found out that today he works as a senior manager in a reputed firm. To imagine how far he has come, is the true impact of this project.

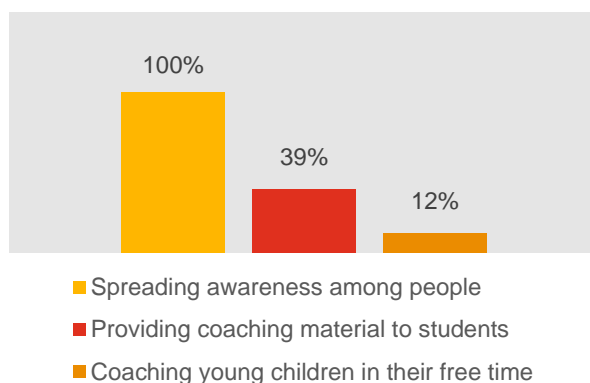
- CSRL Official, GAIL Utkarsh Project

Community Trailblazers:

Feedback from the survey conducted at the centre revealed that alumni engagement had a positive impact on current students. Respondents stated that this interaction inspired students to give back to their community by motivating and supporting other students in joining the coaching project or preparing for competitive entrance examinations. 100% respondents are actively involved in at least one community support activity, demonstrating their commitment to giving back to society.¹⁶

Further, as depicted in Figure 12, **100% of respondents are contributing to their community by raising awareness among friends, family, and schools in their village.** Additionally, 39% are providing coaching materials to students preparing for entrance examinations, and 12% are offering free or low-cost coaching to students preparing for 12th board exams or entrance examinations.¹⁷ "Studying medicine with the support of my coaching centre has been a fulfilling journey. One experience is our regular visits to neighbouring rural areas every Sunday to teach children there. With the knowledge and skills gained from my college education and coaching, I've been able to contribute meaningfully during these visits," said a respondent during the survey.

Figure 11: Support provided to the Community by Respondents, N=33 (Multiple coding)



¹⁵ N=33, Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.

¹⁶ N=33

¹⁷ N=33, Multiple choice question, hence total of responses will not add up to 100%.



3.1.3. Life After Coaching at GAIL Utkarsh Super 60, Varanasi

After completing the entrance examination, students can choose to join available colleges based on their ranks. Alternatively, they may opt to defer admission for a year to achieve a higher rank. This scenario is more prevalent among medical students, who have the option to take the NEET exam up to five times. In contrast, JEE preparatory students are limited to taking the exam twice in two consecutive years.



After attending coaching, respondents reported receiving scholarships from GAIL Trust, other government platforms, and other funding partners of CSRL. Some took on education loans. CSRL has partnerships with other companies to provide additional scholarship support if needed. Faculty also mentioned that in cases where parents are financially burdened with expenses such as travel and registration costs, CSRL employees personally contribute to support the students.



Respondents reported to have settled well in their colleges, in some cases after facing some initial struggle if their college was far from their hometowns. CSRL supported the students by providing them with contact information of other students on their campus from within their project networks. This helped students initially to find their feet in the college. Faculty and students also stated that they also stay in touch through social media and over phone calls. Some students even claimed to have supported CSRL in conducting the entrance tests in their school or village.



For students who chose to drop an additional year, specific to medical aspirants, CSRL supported them by providing them with awareness on available avenues in the healthcare field besides Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS). A student responded, "In 2022, I took a year off and then qualified for the NEET exam, but my marks were not enough for MBBS. After preparing for another year, I got admission for Bachelor of Ayurveda, Medicine, and Surgery (BAMS) in 2023. I chose BAMS because Ayurveda is gaining popularity in India and around the world, with increasing government support and recognition of its benefits. This opens a promising career in healthcare for me."

▶ **Support from GAIL and CSRL is limited for students who drop an additional year after the coaching.** Commonly noted with medical students who drop an additional year, they tend to switch to online coaching or revising their old notes to assist their preparation. **Scholarship options for medical students are limited through the centre.** It was also noted that a clear exit strategy for the project is not devised, for example, what would happen in case the project was not funded by GAIL, or in case any external convergences are being explored for the same.

▶ **Medical students and their parents may require extra counselling if they decide to take an additional year.** It has been observed by faculty that parents often urge their daughters to abandon medical studies due to the lengthy duration of the course. They prefer their daughters to pursue shorter courses and settle for marriage. Furthermore, parents are expected to cover the child's daily expenses, which typically range from INR 5,000 to 10,000 per month, posing a challenge for them. However, there were also cases where parents were taking extra pains to make ends meet and fight societal pressures to support their daughters in pursuing their dreams.

"My daughter is bright, and if she is receiving an opportunity, then I will not come in her way. She can take as much time to fulfil her dreams, marriage can happen in its own time," said a parent.



3.2. IRECS Analysis

Parameter	Rating Category	Assessment from Study
Inclusiveness	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project aims to transform the lives of underprivileged female students by providing residential coaching to enhance their academic performance for engineering (JEE) and medical (NEET) college entrance examinations. 52% of the respondents were from the Other Backward Class (OBC) category, 24% from the Economically Weaker Section (EWS), 18% from the Scheduled Caste (SC), and 6% from other categories such as Scheduled Tribe (ST). 94% of the respondents predominantly belonged to households with an annual income of less than INR 1,50,001. While all respondents had an annual income less than INR 4,00,000 per the eligibility criteria.
Relevance	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% cited the opportunity to access free coaching facilities as the main reason. The survey revealed that the coaching facility significantly reduced the financial burden for their families. 91% of respondents believed it provided an opportunity for socio-economic upliftment. Additionally, 45% agreed that it granted them access to quality teaching and learning. Without this project, respondents said they would have had to explore other options such as online coaching, self-study, or applying for other projects that might not have yielded the same results. Many respondents also mentioned that they would have had to resort to offline coaching facilities costing upwards of INR 1,00,000. Some students also admitted that without the coaching, they would not have opted for competitive streams such as engineering or medical and would have changed their line of study.
Effectiveness	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The stakeholders of the impact assessment study emphasized that the project stands out from others due to its free of cost coaching and residential facility. 85% of the respondents stated that the facility provided them with an environment that improved their focus on their studies. 39% agreed that it helped develop their soft skills. The respondents felt that the additional sessions, meetings, and events held at the centre besides regular classes helped them learn new techniques to improve study efficiency (time management, stress management, etc.), aided in personal growth, and provided exposure to available market opportunities. 100% of the respondents agreed that the residential facility led to peer learning. This opportunity is also transformative for the respondent's family. The respondents highlighted the impact of receiving coaching and gaining access to a leading higher education institute. This empowerment enabled them to serve as changemakers for promoting the values of hard work and education within their community.
Convergence	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is funded by GAIL and implemented by CSRL. As a part of post-coaching completion, CSRL has a network of other entities who support students with scholarships. However, no other convergences are noted during the study.
Sustainability	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is based on a longstanding relationship between GAIL and CSRL. The centre is solely funded by GAIL and in case the funding is not provided, the centre will cease to exist. There are no exit strategies devised currently. GAIL and CSRL can consider developing an exit strategy to explore the potential CSR funding / other donors who can take up going forward in case the project is closed due to unavailability of the CSR funding from GAIL.



3.3. Alignments to GAIL's CSR Policy and UN SDGs

The project is aligned with GAIL (India) Limited's CSR policy which includes education, community development as the key CSR focus area for GAIL Limited. The project is also aligned with Sustainable development Goals.¹⁸ **SDG 1 "No poverty", SDG 4 "Quality Education", SDG 10 "Reduced Inequality" and SDG 17 "Partnership for the Goals".**



- **SDG 1 emphasises ending poverty in all its forms.** The project provides free coaching to underprivileged girls, aiding in poverty alleviation by offering them opportunities to access quality education and potentially break the cycle of poverty.
- **SDG 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education,** whilst promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all through comprehensive coaching and study materials provided to students. This enhances educational outcomes.
- **SDG 10 focuses on reducing inequalities in income as well as those based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status within a country.** By targeting underprivileged students and providing them with resources and support to excel in competitive exams, the project helps reduce socio-economic inequalities and ensures equal opportunities for success regardless of background.
- **SDG 17 aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise global partnerships for sustainable development.** The collaboration between GAIL India Limited and the Utkarsh Super 60 project exemplifies this, pooling resources, and expertise to address social issues and achieve sustainable development objectives.

3.4. Study Limitations

- **Limitation in exploring Focus Group Discussions as a mode of data collection:** The team was unable to conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) due to the geographical spread of the project beneficiaries. The PW team was restricted to conducting surveys and IDIs as the primary mode of data collection. Without FGDs, there was a limitation in capturing the collective experiences, group dynamics and nuanced interaction among beneficiaries.
- **Unavailability of Baseline Report:** There was no baseline report available for desk review as a part of the project. Having this baseline data, including key project indicators, would have been helpful for evaluating the impact of the project and tracking its progress over time.

¹⁸ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>





4. Recommendations

Based on the impact assessment study, the following **way forward and recommendations** are suggested for GAIL's management consideration:

1. Defined Framework for Monitoring Projects:

GAIL and CSRL have documentation (like project progress reports) in place for most of the CSR projects. However, there are some key documents that need to be prepared while moving ahead. These include development of M&E framework/s for individual projects and clear identification of outputs, outcomes and intended impact over a period. The outputs and outcomes should be measured on a quarterly basis against a **benchmark (baseline status)** so that status of the project could be tracked. This will enable incorporation of mid-term correctives during Project monitoring and enable GAIL to report more vividly on their CSR achievements. **An online platform or dashboard for tracking of key indicators could also be considered for tracking purposes for multiple CSR project management.**

2. Enhancing Residential Facility Services:

Facilities which secured low scores as per the impact assessment study can be improved at the centre to enhance focus of the students on their studies. The items rated low were the meals, toilets, and dormitories. Respondents also emphasised on the need for hygiene in the toilets. Measures such as increasing the frequency of toilet cleaning, reducing the number of girls in one dormitory, and improving the management of meals can be explored as options at the centre.

3. Improving on Lagging Soft Skills such as Leadership and Critical thinking:

During the interactions, students expressed their difficulties in understanding English terminology, especially if they came from regional and Hindi medium schools. Students can leverage soft skills to improve their overall confidence and the chances of securing a placement after college. These skills will also foster emotional wellbeing among students. Additional sessions, if possible, from external expert should be held besides coursework to support the personal growth of students to ensure a well-rounded output of the centre activities. Tie-ups with third party agencies for professional emotional and professional counselling, can also be explored to build awareness among students.

4. Increasing Faculty at the Centre:

Students who lacked a strong grasp of the concepts taught in their 11th and 12th-grade coursework found it challenging to keep up with the coaching. To address these issues, an additional team of faculty could assist students, providing support to the main faculty by conducting doubt-clearing sessions and extra classes when necessary.

5. Explore Opportunities for Supporting Drop-Year Students:

Commonly noted among medical students who drop an additional year, they tend to turn to online coaching or revising their old notes to assist their preparation. Students should have options of continued support from CSRL in such cases, either online or through offline doubt classes with the faculty (if feasible) to help them secure a position in a college and course of their choice. With prolonged contact, CSRL can also solve for issues such as parental pressure on the child (common among girls) to switch to shorter courses, ensuring early marriage and settlement.

6. Providing Gender-Sensitisation Training for Faculty and Administrative Staff:

Gender sensitisation trainings are particularly important in courses such as that offered at Varanasi, given that it is run exclusively for girl children. Such training will help the faculty and staff improve their interactions with the students and enhance the student experience at the residence. It will help spread awareness on typical challenges of female students and sensitise staff on their daily needs and requirements. GAIL and CSRL could look at online platforms, or any other external agencies proficient in delivery such organisation-wide sessions.





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