



Impact Assessment Report on the Akshaya Patra MDM project

Apple India Private Limited (AIPL)

September 2026

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full form
AGMARK	Agricultural Marking
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
IRECS	Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence and Sustainability
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDM	Mid-Day Meal
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PM-POSHAN	Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman
TAPF	The Akshaya Patra Foundation

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Executive Summary



Executive Summary of School Meals Project

About the project under evaluation[^]

Apple India Private Limited (AIPL) with the support of **The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF)** focused on **providing nutritious meals to school children** in Bangalore, Hubli, Hyderabad and Puducherry under the PM-POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal) project. The project aimed to address classroom hunger, improve nutritional status, enhance school attendance and promote social cohesion among students. Additionally, as per the activities aligned for the FY 24-25 AIPL also supported in **installing of solar power plants in Akshaya Patra Kitchens** at Bhubaneshwar and Varanasi.

 Implementing Partner The Akshaya Patra Foundation	Review Period May 2024 to May 2025 	Locations MDM – 4 locations Solar Plants – 2 locations 
 Budget 4.6 Cr.	Total Interactions 26 qualitative 	Research framework IRECS 

AIPL engaged **Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP ('PWCALLP')** to provide support and assistance for an **independent impact assessment of the Akshaya Patra MDM project**. This included reviewing the Key performance indicators (KPIs), as defined by the Management under the framework for implementing the CSR project for their outputs, outcomes, and impact. **IRECS Framework (Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence, and Sustainability)** was deployed to assess the impact for the CSR project.

Key Findings:

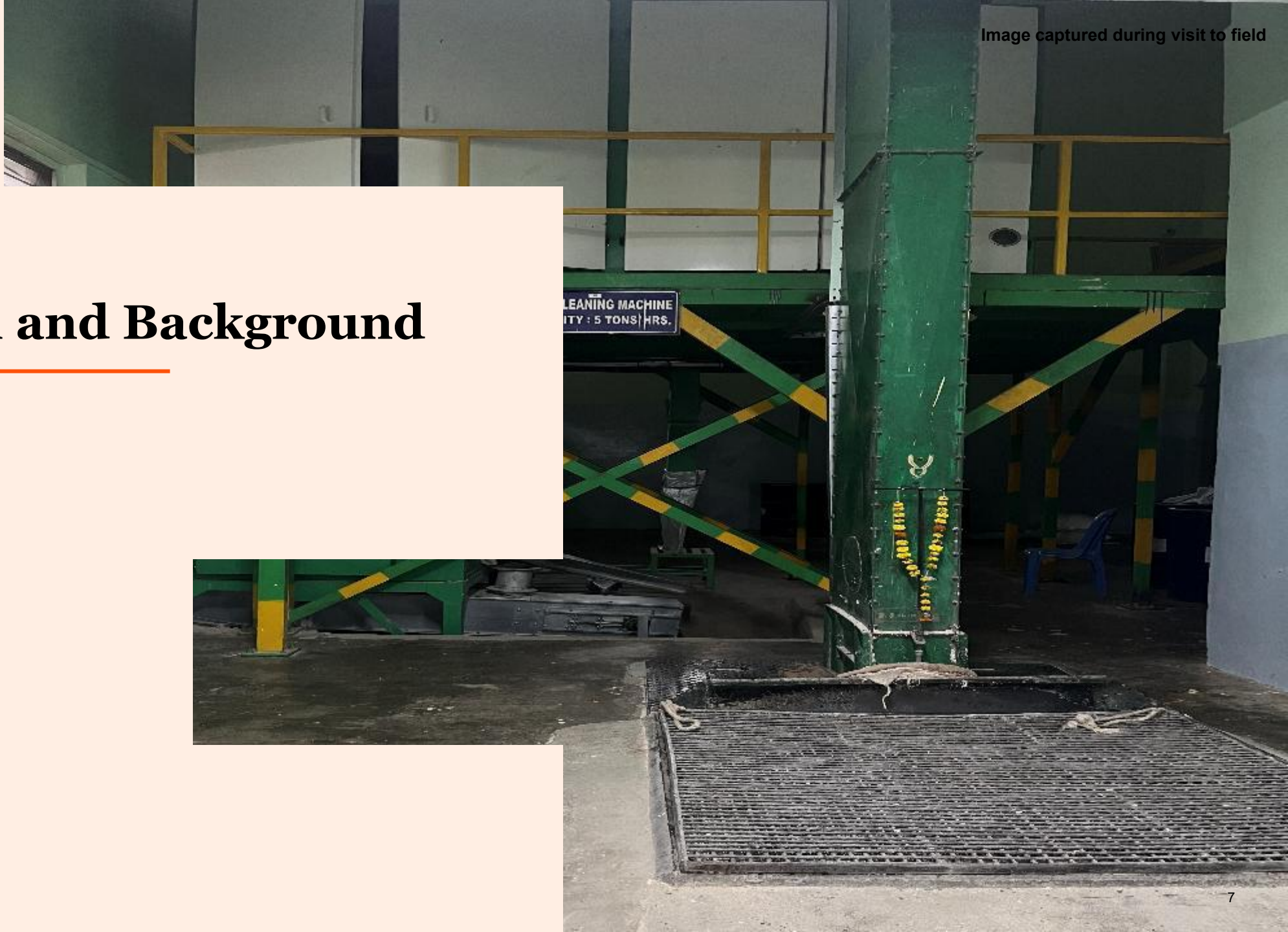
- ❑ **54.8 lakh meals delivered** in Bangalore, Hubli, Hyderabad and Puducherry, through robust systems for procurement, quality assurance, preparation, transportation, and feedback. This further led to reduced burdens on parents.
- ❑ **High student satisfaction:** 87% rated meal timing/temperature positively, 85% taste and hygiene, 83% portion size, and 81% nutritional value.
- ❑ **Positive outcomes reported:** Improved energy levels (87%), wellness (80%), and concentration (74%).
- ❑ Stakeholders noted that while the project mainly supported provision of nutritious meals it also led to improved **classroom focus**, and a **positive learning environment**.
- ❑ The project improved teacher time management and strengthened school operations.

Recommendations:

- ❑ Introduce a simple and age-appropriate student feedback mechanism across all supported schools to systematically capture beneficiary perspectives on meal quality, taste, quantity, menu variety, temperature, and overall satisfaction.
- ❑ Shift the focus of educational outcome monitoring from short-term attendance metrics towards **student retention, grade progression, and continuation in the education system**, particularly among vulnerable children. Where possible, schools may track indicators such as annual retention rates, promotion to the next grade, reduction in dropout risk, and transition from primary to upper-primary levels.

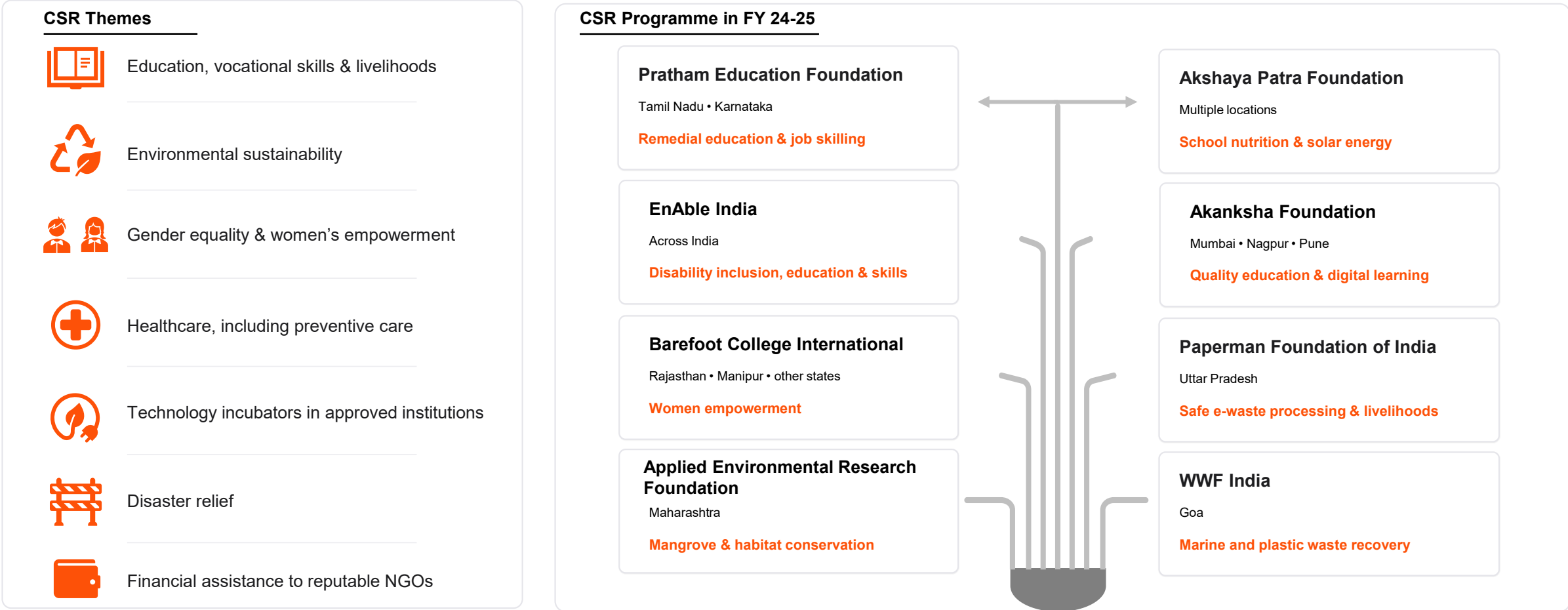
[^]For detailed findings and information about the study please refer to sections 2 to 6

Introduction and Background



CSR at Apple India Private Limited

Apple India Private Limited (AIPL) undertakes CSR programmes according to their CSR policy in categories of **education, employment livelihood generation, environmental sustainability, gender equality, women empowerment, healthcare, disaster relief, financial assistance and funding of technology incubators**. In the FY 24-25 AIPL implemented 8 CSR programmes covering different thematic areas including education, nutrition, environmental sustainability etc. The slide below provides an overview of themes and projects covered in the last financial year.



About the CSR project under evaluation

Apple India Private Limited (AIPL) with the support of The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF) focused on providing nutritious meals to school children under the PM-POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal) project. The project aimed to address classroom hunger, improve nutritional status, enhance school attendance and promote social cohesion among students. Additionally, as per the activities aligned for the FY 24-25 AIPL also supported in installing of solar power plants in Akshaya Patra Kitchens.

Project objectives:
To support in providing :



A) Total of **24,883** children in government schools with **54,77,409** Mid-Day Meals



B) Installation of Solar Power Plants in two locations:



100 kW
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh



50 kW
Bhubaneswar, Odisha

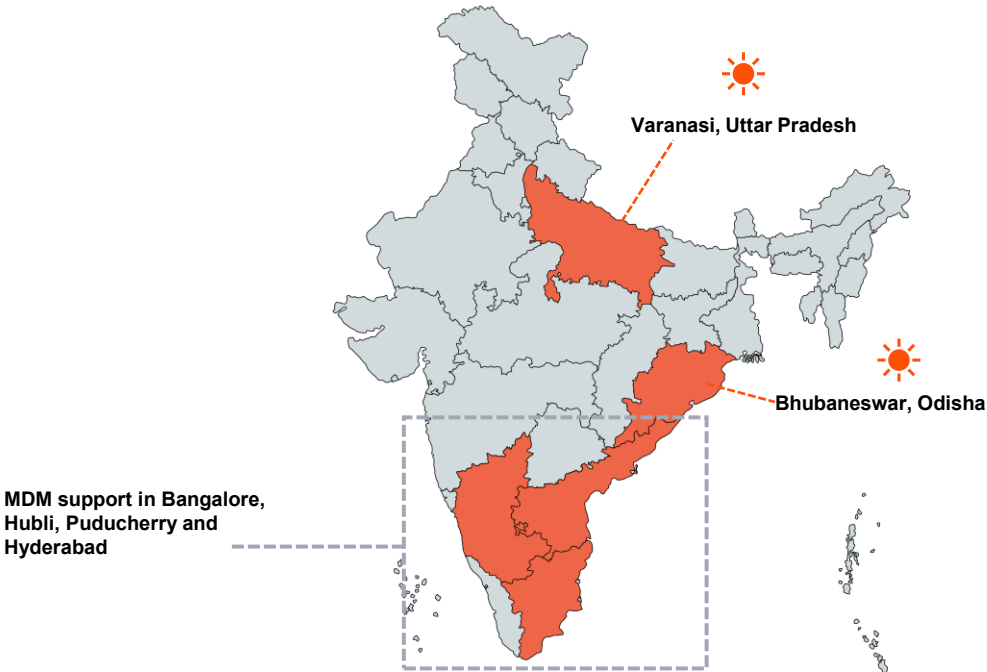
Project Period:

June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025

Total Budget:

INR 4.6 Cr

Locations:



Our Scope of work

AIPL engaged **Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP ('PWCALLP')** to provide support and assistance for an **independent impact assessment of the Akshaya Patra MDM project**. This included reviewing the Key performance indicators (KPIs), as defined by the Management under the framework for implementing the CSR project for their outputs, outcomes, and impact. **IRECS Framework (Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence, and Sustainability)** was **deployed** to assess the impact for the CSR project.

The scope of work included below activities:

- ❑ Developed understanding of the scope and boundary of the CSR project.
- ❑ Conducted desk review of the documentation provided by AIPL and consultations with AIPL, agreed with the Management on the parameters to be assessed for the Impact Assessment.
- ❑ Carried out the stakeholder mapping for the project to identify key stakeholder groups to be interacted with during the assessment
- ❑ Based on the above, developed the qualitative questionnaires* to be used during the assessment for conducting in-depth interviews, interactions, meetings with the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the CSR project.
- ❑ Data collection through virtual/ in-person interactions (as relevant) based on the questionnaires developed and consultations done
- ❑ Based on the interactions and discussions, conducted analysis of the information and assessment of outcome/impact was done
- ❑ Developed a report based on the overall findings including the recommendations for Management's consideration



*Given the nature of the support provided this study was only qualitative in nature, as agreed with Apple India

Approach and Methodology



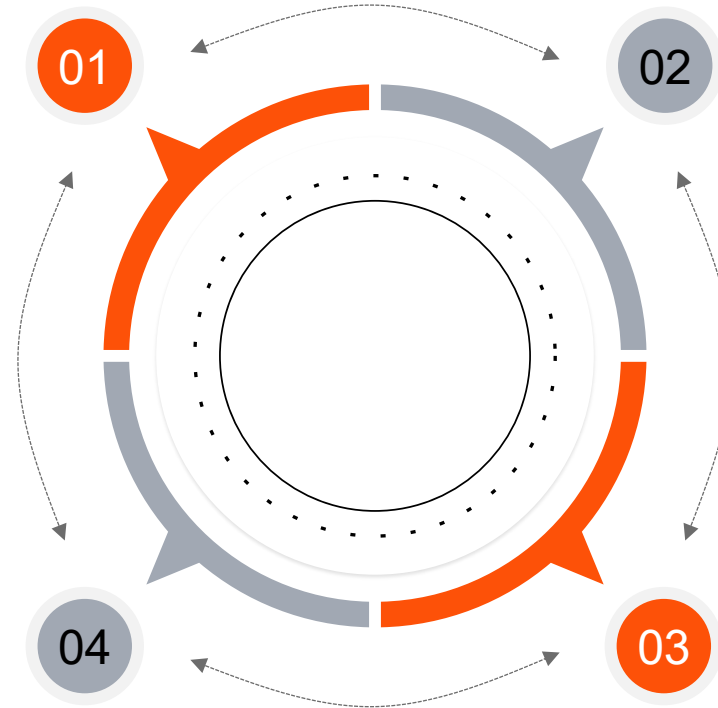
Our Scope of work

Inception meetings and desk review of the project documents

- Held an inception meeting with AIPL to align on engagement scope and expectations from the impact assessment study.
- Shared the list of project documents with TAPF team to initiate the desk review.
- Reviewed project documents thoroughly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the activities involved.
- Finalised the list of key stakeholders.

Data analysis, and report writing

- Qualitative notes were reviewed and analysed to identify key impact themes / areas.
- An impact assessment report was prepared for AIPL, detailing the process, results, key findings and management recommendations.



Sampling and tools preparation

- Developed a qualitative research design, to conduct IRECS-based impact assessment, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of project-wise outcomes and stakeholder benefits.
- Qualitative tools for interactions with the children, teachers were prepared, TAPF team wherever possible.
- A total of 26 qualitative interactions were done, based on the availability of students, teachers, etc.

Field visit for data collection

- Conducted field visits interactions to engage with stakeholders, supported by TAPF local teams.
- Performed Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) following the finalized sampling frame and research tools.

IRECS framework for Impact Assessment

The impact of the project was assessed using the IRECS framework. IRECS is geared to provide an overall feedback on the efficacy of implementation as well, as its efficiency in terms of achievement of the desired outputs with reference to inputs. IRECS framework measured the performance of the various projects on five parameters - Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence and Sustainability.

Effectiveness

Have the activities been able to effectively address community expectations? How efficiently have the resources been deployed, monitored and utilised?

Relevance

Are the services /inputs in the project able to meet community priorities? How was the planning done ? Was it participatory ? How were the success indicators developed? Was the community involved in development of project indicators?

Inclusiveness

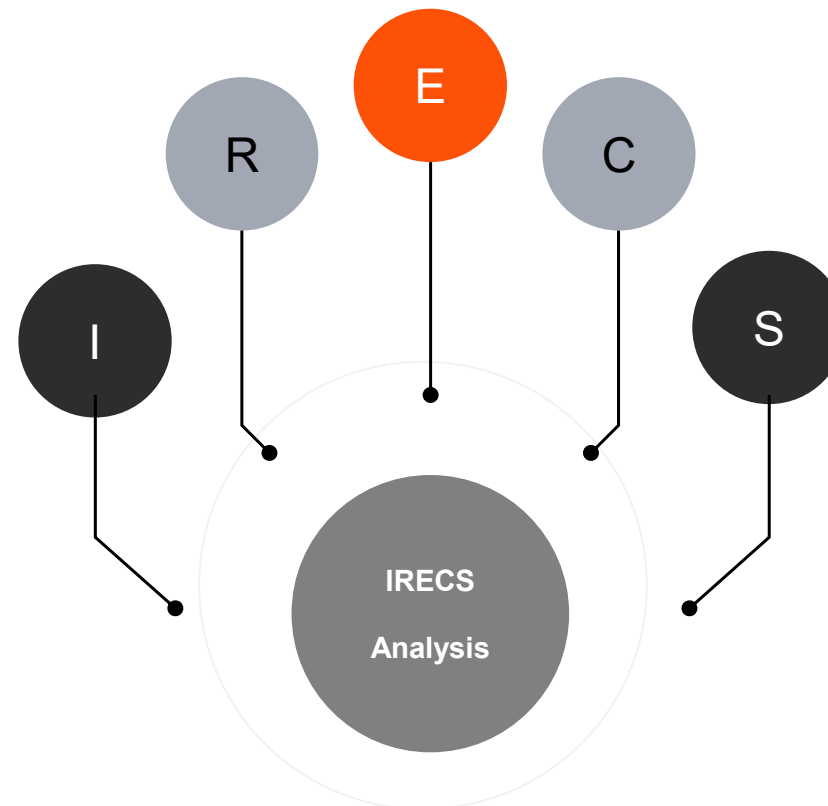
Ability of different stakeholders, particularly poorest and most marginalised - to access the benefits of activities.

Convergence

Degree of convergence with government/other partnerships; relationship between individuals, community, NGOs, institutions and other stakeholders.

Sustainability

Do communities feel ownership over the assets created by the activities and/or will the Project initiated community interventions sustain even after the exit of the funding agency. Has an exit strategy been drafted?



Sampling

Based on the information shared by AIPL and subsequent discussions with the Akshaya Patra team, it was decided that the impact assessment of the Akshaya Patra MDM project would be conducted solely through **qualitative interactions**. Furthermore, the sampling approach was aligned with the nature of support provided across the six project locations. **In Bhubaneswar and Varanasi, where support was limited to the installation of solar plants**, qualitative interviews were conducted with Kitchen Managers and Lead Electricians. In the remaining locations, where children received Mid-Day Meals, interactions were undertaken with students, teachers, and parents (where available). The table below provides an overview of the stakeholder groups consulted and the number of interactions conducted at each location.

Qualitative Sampling

Location	Stakeholder covered	Sample	Interaction Type
Puducherry	School children	3	FGD
	MDM teacher in charge / School Principal or HM	2	KII
	TAPF Kitchen Manager	1	KII
Hyderabad	School children	3	FGD
	MDM teacher in charge / School Principal or HM	2	KII
	TAPF Kitchen Manager	1	KII
Bangalore	School children	3	FGD
	MDM teacher in charge / School Principal or HM	2	KII
	TAPF Kitchen Manager	1	KII
Hubli	School children	3	FGD
	MDM teacher in charge / School Principal or HM	2	KII
	TAPF Kitchen Manager	1	KII
Bhubaneshwar	TAPF Kitchen Manager / Electrician	1	KII
Varanasi	TAPF Kitchen Manager / Electrician	1	KII
TOTAL		26	-

Assumptions and Limitations

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- ❑ Our scope of work, including any advice / assistance, was limited to the scope of services specifically defined in the Letter. We were not responsible for the implementation of our recommendations.
- ❑ By giving our consent to the publication of our report and opinion on the Company's website ('your website') we do not accept any duty of care and deny any liability.
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- ❑ All pictures / images provided in the report have been captured during field visit to project locations.

Assumptions pertaining to this report:

- ❑ The report prepared by the PWCALLP is based upon the (a) information/ documents provided by AIPL (b) data collected during the field visit to the projects' locations by the PWCALLP team. PWCALLP performed and prepared the Information at the client's direction and exclusively for the client's sole benefit and use pursuant to its client agreement. Our report is based on the completeness and accuracy of the above-stated facts and assumptions, which if not entirely complete or accurate, should be communicated to us immediately, as the inaccuracy or incompleteness could have a material impact on our conclusions.
- ❑ PWCALLP's work was limited to the samples/specific procedures described in this report and were based only on the information and analysis of the data obtained through qualitative interviews of beneficiaries supported under the intervention, selected as respondents. Accordingly, changes in circumstances/samples/ procedures or information available could affect the findings outlined in this report.
- ❑ Due to the nature of the project, i.e. support to school children, it was decided that minimal qualitative interactions would take place with students and only in the presence of school-teachers / parents / guardians.



Key Findings

Need for the intervention

1

Operational costs of schools and teacher time management in addressing child nutrition

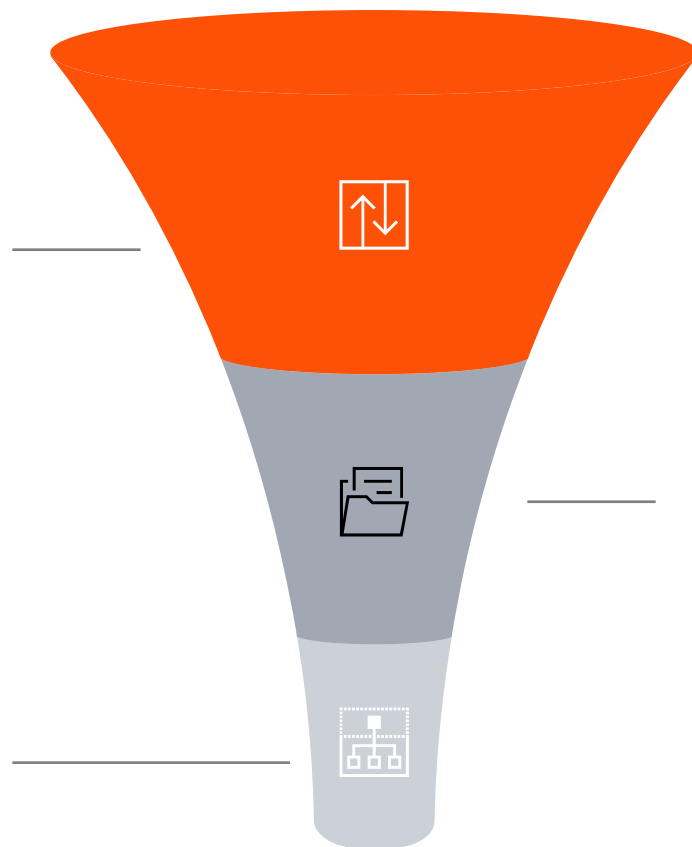
- ❑ Government schools play a critical role in children's holistic development but often operate under constraints related to funding, infrastructure, food procurement, kitchen facilities, and workforce capacity. Further teachers at these school face time constraints due to the number of admin related tasks. Hence are unable to focus their attention on teaching students.
- ❑ Providing safe and nutritious meals consistently to large numbers of students requires significant operational resources and coordination.
- ❑ The PM POSHAN scheme itself recognizes these requirements through provisions for food grains, cooking costs, kitchen infrastructure, transportation, and cook-cum-helpers, underscoring the scale and complexity of school meal delivery.

3

Child malnutrition and impact on learning

- ❑ Child malnutrition remains a significant challenge in India despite economic and healthcare advancements. NFHS-5 reports that 35.5% of children are stunted, 19.3% wasted, 32.1% underweight, and 67.1% anaemic.
- ❑ Poor nutrition in early childhood can have lasting impacts on physical growth, cognitive development, immunity, and learning outcomes.

Source: NFHS data ([link](#)) & interactions with stakeholders



2

Urbanisation, migration and inequality

- ❑ Many beneficiary children come from low-income families whose parents work long hours in informal, daily-wage, or labour-intensive jobs.
- ❑ Economic pressures can limit households' ability to consistently provide nutritious morning and mid-day meals.
- ❑ Migration, irregular incomes, and rising living costs further affect food security and dietary diversity, increasing children's nutritional vulnerability.

“

Before Akshaya Patra started providing the meals, the food was prepared at the school itself. It was more troublesome for the school and teachers because we had to arrange the vegetables and other ingredients, keep records and manage the whole process ourselves.

The quality of the food was also not as good as what we are getting now through Akshaya Patra.

Now the food comes prepared from the Akshaya Patra kitchen, so we do not have to manage the cooking and procurement process ourselves. This has made things much easier for us.

- Head Master Dharwad school, Hubli

”

Overview of the MDM process

The Akshaya Patra MDM project follows a standardized operational process that is consistently applied across all its locations. This information was provided by the Akshaya Patra team during interactions.

Procurement and Storage of Raw Materials

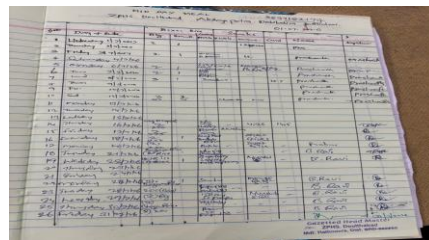
- The process begins with the procurement of raw materials from FSSAI- and AGMARK-certified suppliers to ensure compliance with established food quality and safety standards.
- Upon receipt, all ingredients undergo quality checks, sorting, and sanitization before being accepted into inventory.
- Perishable items are stored in temperature-controlled cold storage facilities maintained below 5°C, while other ingredients are stored under prescribed conditions to preserve freshness and prevent contamination.
- This stage establishes the foundation for maintaining quality throughout the food preparation cycle.



Cold Storage at Kitchen

Demand Planning and Indent Generation

- Prior to daily production, student attendance and meal requirements are collected from participating schools (also daily) to estimate the quantity of food required.
- Based on these projections, indents are generated and forwarded to the storage department.
- The storage team subsequently issues the required raw materials along with relevant production and monitoring documentation to the production department.
- This systematic planning process helps minimize wastage, ensures optimal utilization of resources, and enables meals to be prepared according to actual demand.



School booklet containing need / daily delivery

Pre-processing and Meal Preparation

- Once materials are issued, the production team undertakes a series of pre-processing activities, including washing, sorting, peeling, cutting, and other preparation procedures.
- Raw materials are then cooked according to the approved menu and standardized recipes.
- Throughout the process, strict hygiene and food safety protocols are followed, including the use of sanitized vessels, proper handling practices, and temperature-controlled cooking.
- These measures help ensure that meals are nutritious, safe for consumption, and prepared consistently across production cycles.



Pre-processing – cleaning at kitchen

Distribution, Delivery and Feedback

- Following preparation, meals are packed into insulated containers and dispatched through sanitized delivery vehicles.
- The transportation process is carefully coordinated to ensure that food reaches schools within the prescribed time while maintaining quality and temperature.
- Upon delivery, School Relationship Officers (SROs) and school representatives oversee meal receipt and collect feedback regarding food quality, quantity, and student satisfaction.
- This feedback mechanism enables continuous monitoring and improvement, ensuring that the project remains responsive to the needs of schools and beneficiaries.



Storage and loaded delivery truck

Key findings

Overall Reach of the project



471

Schools reached



24,883

Children fed



54,77,409

Meals delivered

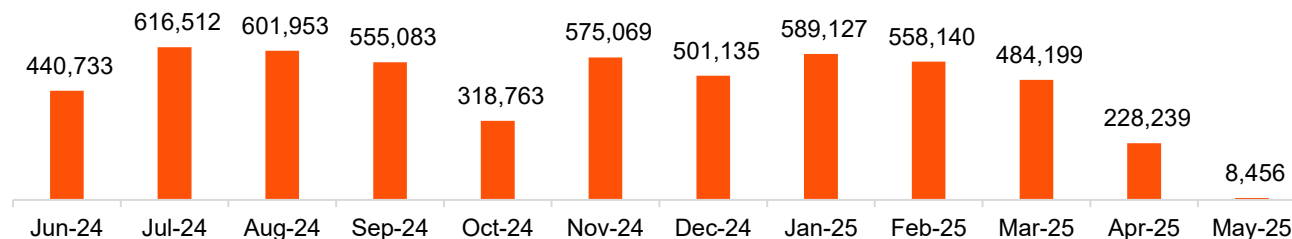


100kW, 50kW

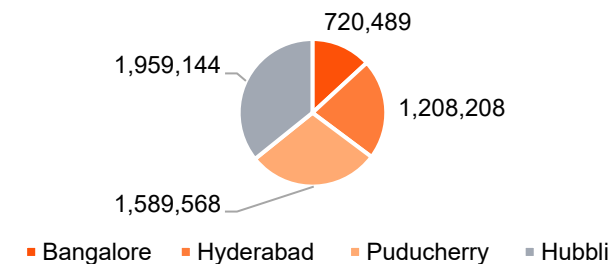
Solar plant installed

- ❑ **Extensive School Network Coverage:** The project reached nearly five hundred government schools, enabling children across multiple locations to access safe and nutritious meals on every school day. The scale of coverage demonstrates the project's ability to support educational institutions serving underserved communities and strengthen school-based nutrition systems.
- ❑ **Improved Nutritional Access for Children:** Through the initiative, children received nutritious meals, helping address food insecurity and supporting their health, growth, and learning outcomes. For many beneficiaries, these meals represented a reliable source of nutrition during the school day.
- ❑ **Large-Scale Meal Delivery:** An approximate fifty-five lakh meals were delivered during the reporting period in Bangalore, Hubli, Hyderabad and Puducherry, highlighting the project's operational efficiency and capacity to consistently provide nutritious meals at scale while maintaining quality and food safety standards. As per data collected and interactions with TAPF central and state teams (kitchen managers) it was observed that throughout the months the total number of meals delivered remained at ~5,00,000 (as seen in the figure below). The kitchen managers state meals delivered remain less in April-May and June due to school vacations and in months of October due to public holidays.

Month wise meal distributed under AIPL supported project



Location wise meal distributed under AIPL supported project



Summary of impact created (1/6)

Improved Child Nutrition – Teacher's perspective

- ❑ The project delivers freshly prepared, nutritionally balanced meals designed in line with PM POSHAN nutrition guidelines.
- ❑ As mentioned by TAPF and other stakeholders, meals typically include a combination of:
 1. **Cereals and grains** for energy requirements
 2. **Pulses and legumes** for protein intake
 3. **Vegetables** to improve dietary diversity and micronutrient intake
 4. **Fortified ingredients** (where applicable) to address nutrient deficiencies
 5. **Region-specific menu variations** to ensure acceptability and consumption
- ❑ As mentioned during interactions with school-teachers, by providing a hot cooked meal during the school day, TAPF improves access to essential nutrients required for physical growth, cognitive development, immunity, and concentration. Further Akshaya Patra through the project also supplies the schools with snacks (prepared daily) that the children are very happy with.
- ❑ The end-to-end meal delivery system follows a standardized operational process across all Akshaya Patra locations (as described earlier). This ensures safe and hygienic meals are being delivered on a day-to-day basis directly to students.
- ❑ This has led to an improved access to regular and nutritious meals, reduced risk of hunger during school hours, support towards addressing nutritional gaps among vulnerable children and overall has enhanced dietary diversity and nutrient intake of the children.

“Around 20–30% of our students are from poor families. Some children come to school without having breakfast in the morning. They may only have milk before coming to school. So, the meal provided at school becomes quite important for them.”

- Headmaster of a school in Hyderabad

“Some students are still so poor that they rely on this meal to meet their hunger.” Students and even their parents are dependent on this program to provide them with a nutritious meal.”

- Head of School Puducherry

“The main impact is that the students are satisfied that they are getting hot, nutritious, varied and on-time food options on a daily basis.”

- Kitchen Manager at Bangalore

TAPF Recipes/Food Items	Nutrition Components
Fortified edible oil	Vitamin A and D
Double fortified salt	Iodine and Iron
Fortified FCI rice	Folic acid, iron, Vitamin-B
Banana green / raw banana	Enhances the iron content of recipe
Brinjal	Adds to the folic acid content of recipe
Capsicum	It adds to the carotene, Vitamin C content of the dish.
Coriander leaves / dhaniya patta	It adds to the carotene, calcium, Vitamin-C content of the dish.
Carrot	It adds to the carotene, calcium content of the dish.
Curry leaves / kadi patta	It adds to the carotene, calcium content of the dish.
Drumstick /	It adds to the carotene, Vitamin c content of the dish.
Ladies finger / bhindi	Adds to the folic acid content of recipe
Methi leaves	It adds to the calcium content of the dish.
Spinach /palak	Adds to the folic acid and Carotene content of recipe
Tomato	It adds to the carotene content of the dish

TAPF recipes and nutrition components

TAPF Weekly menu

Food Grain	Quantity (in Grams)	Weight (in Kg)
1. Rice	100	100
2. Dal	50	50
3. Vegetables	50	50
4. Milk	100	100
5. Oil / Fat	10	10
6. Sugar	10	10
7. Condiments	10	10
8. Mixture Powder	10	10

Summary of impact created (2/6)

Improved Child Nutrition – Students perspective

During the FGDs, children were asked to rate the food across various parameters (presented below). Ratings were captured using a predefined scale, and the findings were analysed to determine the percentage of students who rated the food as "Exceptional" or "Very Good." The results are presented below.

Taste Emerged as a Strong Driver of Meal Acceptance

Across the 12 FGDs, approximately **85% (51/60)** of student responses reflected Exceptional or Very Good perceptions of meal taste. Students frequently associated the meals with enjoyable eating experiences, indicating that the menu is broadly aligned with children's preferences and encourages regular meal consumption.

Portion Sizes Were Considered Sufficient by Most Students

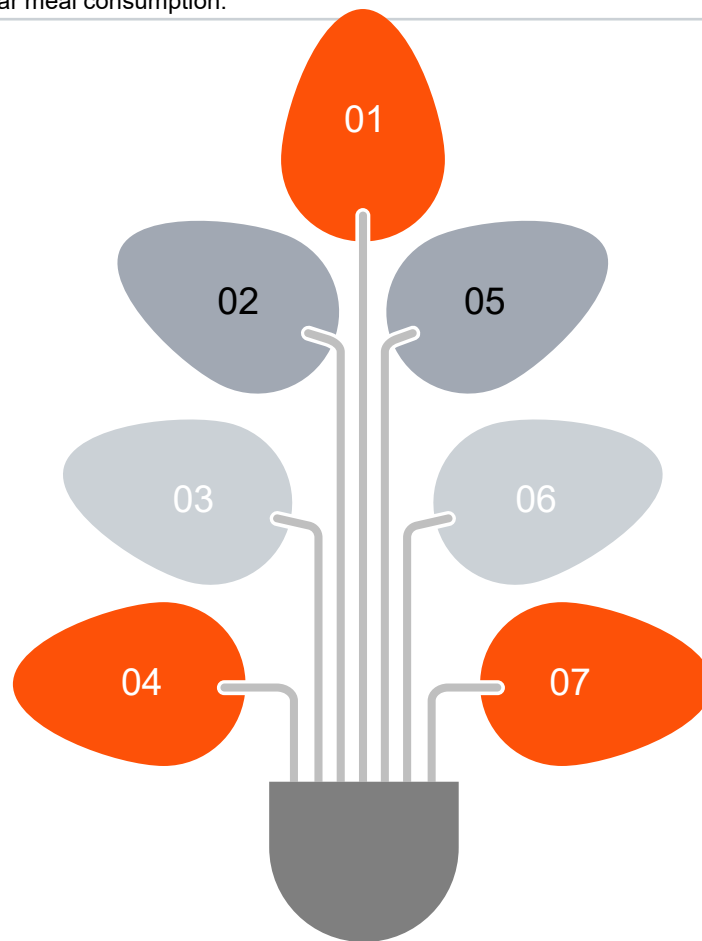
Nearly **83% (50/60)** of responses indicated that portion sizes were either Exceptional or Very Good. Students generally felt that the meals were adequate to address hunger during school hours, suggesting that the project is effectively supporting children's daily nutritional intake.

Hygiene and Cleanliness Were Consistently Recognised

Feedback related to hygiene and cleanliness was overwhelmingly positive, with close to **85% (51/60)** of responses falling in the Exceptional or Very Good categories. Students commonly described meals as being clean, safe, and well managed, reflecting strong confidence in food preparation and handling practices.

Timely Delivery Was One of the Most Appreciated Features

Approximately **87% (52/60)** of responses highlighted timely meal delivery as either Exceptional or Very Good. Students indicated that meals are typically served as expected during the school schedule, minimizing disruptions and ensuring that children receive food when needed.



Food Temperature Contributed to Overall Satisfaction

Around **87% (52/60)** of responses positively rated the temperature of meals. Discussions suggested that students generally receive food that is fresh and adequately warm, enhancing overall enjoyment and reinforcing perceptions of meal quality.

Students Recognised the Nutritional Benefits of the Project

Approximately **81% (49/60)** of responses rated the nutritional value of meals as Exceptional or Very Good. While students did not necessarily discuss nutrition in technical terms, many linked the meals to improved energy levels, reduced hunger, and better ability to concentrate during classes.

Menu Variety (including snacks) Was Appreciated Though Students Expressed Interest in Greater Diversity

Feedback regarding menu variety was positive overall, with nearly **74% (44/60)** of responses categorised as Exceptional or Very Good. However, compared to other parameters, students more frequently suggested introducing additional dishes and increasing menu diversity. This indicates that while the existing menu is generally well received, periodic menu innovations could further strengthen engagement and satisfaction.

Summary of impact created (3/6)

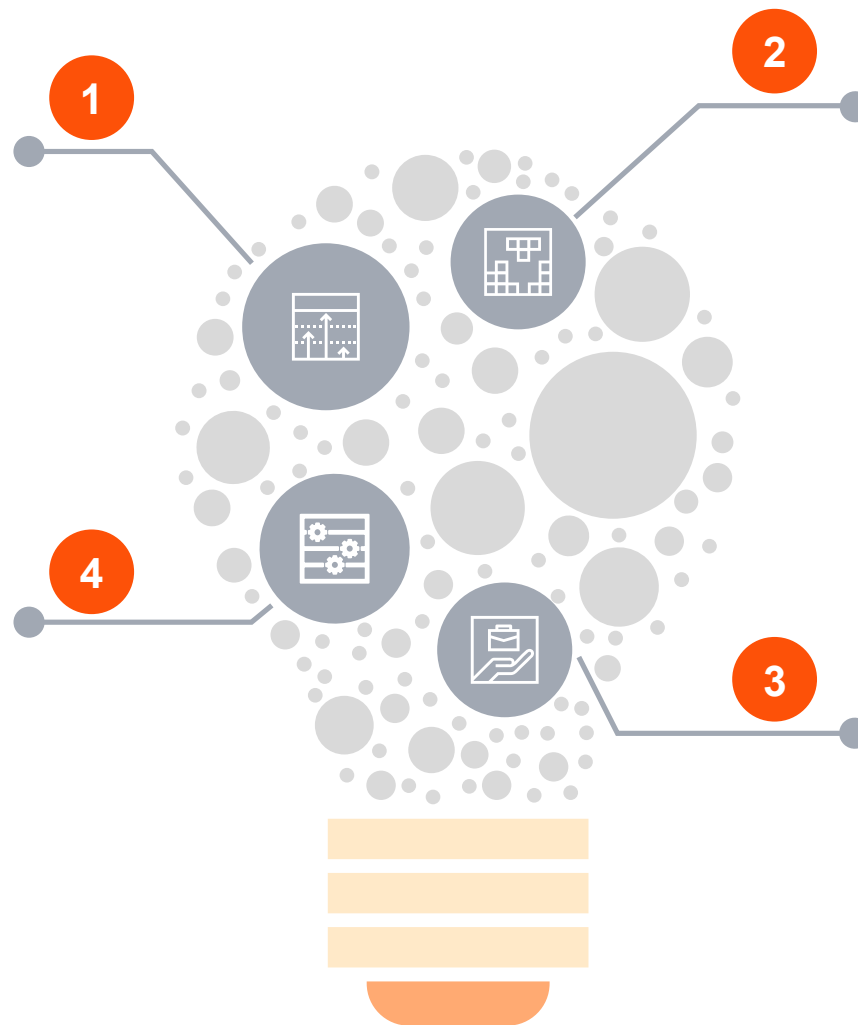
Better Child Learning – Teacher's perspective

Encouraging Regular School Attendance

- ❑ The project acts as an important incentive for school attendance, particularly for children from economically disadvantaged households where access to nutritious food may be uncertain.
- ❑ Teachers across locations highlighted that some children arrive at school without breakfast and rely on the school meal as an important source of nourishment during the day.
- ❑ The availability of a hot meal reduces hunger-related barriers to attendance and helps ensure that children remain engaged with schooling.

Supporting Educational Equity for Vulnerable Children

- ❑ Many beneficiaries come from households dependent on daily wage labour, domestic work, small businesses, delivery services and other low-income occupations.
- ❑ For these children, the project ensures access to a nutritious meal regardless of household circumstances.
- ❑ Teachers consistently emphasized that the school meal serves as a critical support mechanism for children who may otherwise face challenges accessing nutritious food during the day.



Creating a Positive Learning Environment

- ❑ The provision of safe, hygienic, nutritious and varied meals contributes to an overall positive school experience.
- ❑ Stakeholders highlighted that children appreciate receiving hot meals with menu variety, and even students who bring food from home often choose to consume the meals provided through the project.
- ❑ This positive response enhances student satisfaction and helps create a supportive school environment.

Supporting Concentration, Alertness and Classroom Participation

- ❑ Adequate nutrition is fundamental to children's ability to focus and learn. Stakeholders reported that children who receive regular school meals appear more energetic, attentive and better able to participate in classroom activities.
- ❑ Teachers and project staff noted improvements in children's alertness and ability to concentrate, particularly during subjects requiring sustained attention, like math or history.

Summary of impact created (4/6)

Better Child Learning – Students perspective

During the FGDs, children were asked to rate the benefits of MDM across various parameters (presented below). Ratings were captured using a predefined scale, and the findings were analysed to determine the percentage of students who rated the food as “Moderate” or “Significant Improvement.” The results are presented below.

Improved Overall Wellness and Reduced Incidence of Illness

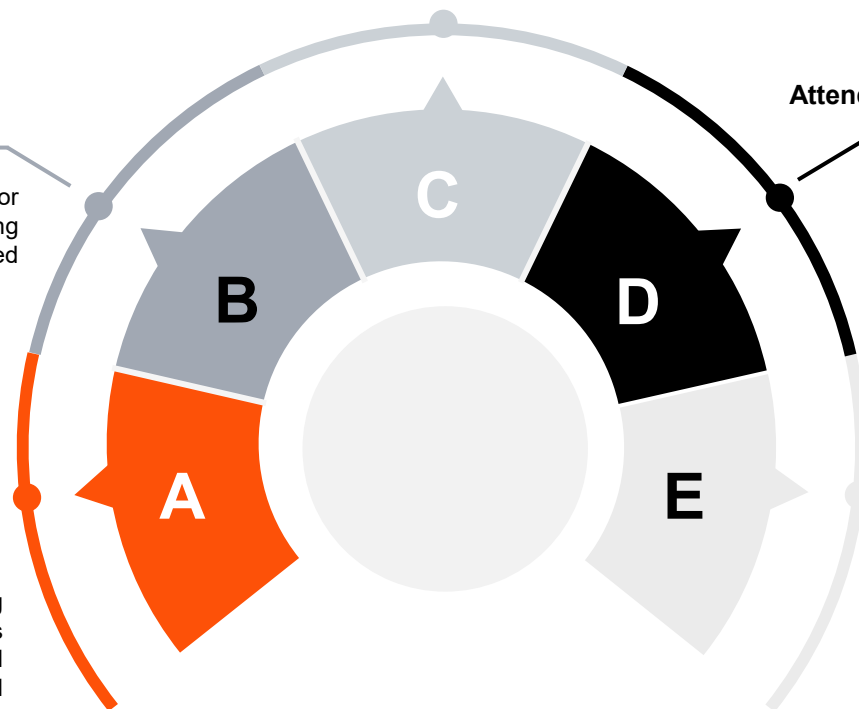
Nearly **80% (48 out of 60 students)** reported a moderate or significant improvement in overall health and wellness. Students often described feeling healthier and perceived a reduction in minor illnesses and fatigue over time.

Positive Changes in Focus and Concentration

Around **74% (44 out of 60 students)** indicated a moderate or significant improvement in their ability to focus and concentrate during classes. Students frequently associated regular meals with improved attentiveness and greater participation in classroom activities.

Increased Energy Levels Reported by Most Students

Approximately **87% (52 out of 60 students)** reported experiencing either a moderate or significant improvement in their energy levels after consuming school meals. Students commonly linked meal consumption with feeling more active throughout the school day and being less distracted by hunger.



Attendance Patterns Appeared better

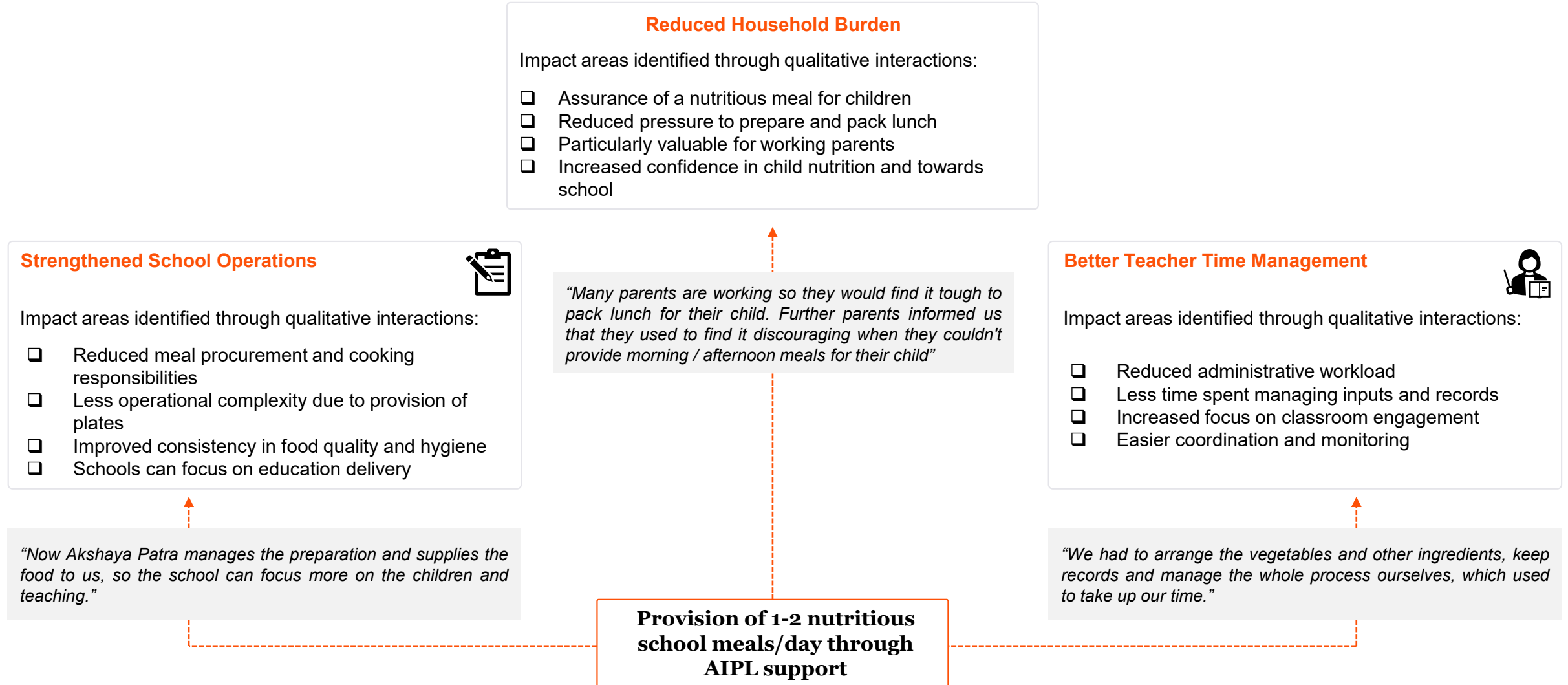
Around **43% (26 out of 60 students)** reported a moderate or significant improvement in attendance and regularity. A majority, 52% (31 out of 60 students), reported no noticeable change, suggesting that attendance may be influenced by a range of household, social, and school-related factors beyond meal provision alone.

Limited Formal Feedback Mechanisms

Most students, approximately **70% (42 out of 60 students)**, indicated that they had never provided suggestions or feedback regarding school meals. Only 28% (17 out of 60 students) reported doing so occasionally, while a very small proportion, 2% (1 out of 60 students), reported providing feedback frequently. This suggests an opportunity to strengthen student feedback mechanisms and make them more participatory.

Summary of impact created (5/6)

Support to the school and parents



Summary of impact created (6/6)

Enhanced sustainability due to solar plants

While no direct MDM support was provided through the AIPL project, the solar power plants in Bhubaneswar and Varanasi have enhanced the operational sustainability of Akshaya Patra kitchens by reducing energy costs, lowering dependence on diesel-based power, and enabling resources to be redirected towards serving more children and maintaining meal quality, delivering meals to ~1,20,000 students across the two locations.

❑ As informed by the Kitchen Manager / Operation Manager, the installation of solar power systems has significantly reduced electricity expenditure for Akshaya Patra kitchens. In Bhubaneswar, **monthly electricity-related expenses reportedly declined from approximately INR 1.5 lakh to INR 1 lakh**, reducing the cost burden associated with large-scale meal production. The kitchens have also become less dependent on diesel generators during power outages, resulting in more efficient and cost-effective operations.

❑ Stakeholders mentioned that savings generated through solar-powered operations have directly supported expansion of meal services. As operational costs reduced, kitchens were able to allocate more resources toward project delivery, allowing them to increase the number of meals prepared and distributed each day. The Kitchen Manager mentioned that meal production reportedly increased from approximately **80,000–90,000 meals to 1.2–1.3 lakh meals per day** in Varanasi kitchen.

❑ Beyond scale, cost savings have enabled additional investments in food quality and meal preparation. Kitchen teams indicated **that solar-related savings have helped support better-quality food and materials used in meal production** while maintaining uninterrupted kitchen operations.

❑ Solar power contributes to Akshaya Patra's broader sustainability objectives by reducing dependence on conventional electricity and diesel-based backup systems. **Stakeholders also highlighted that solar energy supports charging and operation of electric vehicles used in project logistics, creating additional environmental benefits across the meal delivery value chain.**

POTENTIAL IMPACT GENERATED

- 
- Lower operating costs
 - Reduced dependence on diesel-based power
 - Improved financial sustainability of kitchen operations
- 
- Increased meal coverage hence more children provided with Nutritious meals in schools
- 
- Enhanced meal quality due to improved resource allocation towards food preparation
 - Continued delivery of nutritious meals at scale
- 
- Lower carbon footprint of kitchen operations
 - Reduced reliance on fossil fuels
 - Support for EV-based transportation systems

IRECS Analysis



IRECS Analysis (1/2)

Inclusiveness

- ❑ The project enabled children across 471 government schools to access regular, safe and nutritious meals, reaching 24,883 children across Bengaluru, Hubli, Hyderabad and Puducherry.
- ❑ The intervention was particularly valuable for children from economically vulnerable households, including families dependent on informal work, daily-wage labour, domestic work and other low-income occupations.
- ❑ For children who arrived at school without breakfast or had limited access to nutritious food at home, the school meal served as an important and reliable source of nourishment.
- ❑ By providing meals through the government-school system, the project supported equitable access irrespective of household circumstances.

Relevance

- ❑ The project responded directly to the interconnected challenges of classroom hunger, inadequate dietary access, child nutrition and the operational difficulties faced by schools in preparing meals.
- ❑ It was also relevant for working parents who may have limited time or financial ability to prepare morning or midday meals for their children.
- ❑ Meals were designed in accordance with PM-POSHAN nutrition requirements and included cereals, pulses, vegetables, fortified ingredients where applicable, and region-specific menu variations.
- ❑ Daily attendance-based demand planning helped align meal quantities with school requirements. While menu acceptance was positive overall, 74% of student responses rated menu variety as exceptional or very good, lower than the ratings for other meal-quality parameters.

Effectiveness

- ❑ 54.8 lakh meals delivered through robust systems for procurement, quality assurance, preparation, transportation, and feedback.
- ❑ High student satisfaction: 87% rated meal timing/temperature positively, 85% taste and hygiene, 83% portion size, and 81% nutritional value.
- ❑ Positive outcomes reported: Improved energy levels (87%), wellness (80%), and concentration (74%). Stakeholders noted that the project supports nutrition, classroom focus, a positive learning environment, and modest improvements in attendance.
- ❑ The project reduced burdens on parents, improved teacher time management, and strengthened school operations.
- ❑ Students appreciated the snacks provided by the TAPF team
- ❑ Students expressed interest in greater menu diversity, highlighting an opportunity for periodic menu enhancement.

IRECS Analysis (2/2)

Convergence

- ❑ The project reflected convergence between AIPL's CSR support, The Akshaya Patra Foundation's centralised kitchen and delivery systems, participating government schools, and the broader PM-POSHAN framework. Schools provided attendance and meal-demand information, while Akshaya Patra managed procurement, preparation, transportation and quality monitoring.
- ❑ This institutional arrangement reduced the meal-related administrative and operational burden on schools. Teachers and school administrators reported spending less time arranging ingredients, managing cooking processes and maintaining related records, enabling greater attention to classroom engagement and educational responsibilities.
- ❑ The solar interventions in Bhubaneswar and Varanasi also created convergence between child nutrition objectives and environmental sustainability and is aligned with Government of India's goal towards decreasing reliance on Fossil Fuels by 2030.

Sustainability

- ❑ The project's standardised operating model supports continuity and replication. Procurement from certified suppliers, quality-control systems, established recipes, insulated transportation and formal school-level coordination help maintain food quality and operational consistency across locations.
- ❑ The solar plants supported by AIPL strengthened the operational sustainability of Akshaya Patra's kitchens (in Bhubaneswar and Varanasi) by reducing energy expenditure, dependence on diesel-based backup power and exposure to electricity disruptions.
- ❑ In Bhubaneswar, monthly electricity-related expenditure reportedly decreased from approximately INR 1.5 lakh to INR 1 lakh. Stakeholders also reported that operational savings supported meal delivery, food quality and project expansion.





Recommendations

Project recommendations

1

Establish a Structured Student Feedback Mechanism

- ❑ Introduce a simple and age-appropriate student feedback mechanism across all supported schools to systematically capture beneficiary perspectives on meal quality, taste, quantity, menu variety, temperature, and overall satisfaction. This could be implemented through quarterly classroom-based feedback sessions, suggestion boxes, or short feedback formats facilitated by teachers and School Relationship Officers. The assessment found that approximately **70% of students had never provided any feedback regarding the meals**, despite being the primary beneficiaries of the project.
- ❑ While the assessment indicates high levels of satisfaction across most meal quality parameters, establishing structured feedback channels would help Akshaya Patra and AIPL better understand evolving student preferences, identify location-specific concerns, and make evidence-based refinements to menus and service delivery. More importantly, it would increase student participation and ownership, ensuring that project improvements are informed by the voices of the children it seeks to serve.

2

Track Student Retention and Continuation in School Rather than Attendance Alone

- ❑ Shift the focus of educational outcome monitoring from short-term attendance metrics towards **student retention, grade progression, and continuation in the education system**, particularly among vulnerable children. Where possible, schools may track indicators such as annual retention rates, promotion to the next grade, reduction in dropout risk, and transition from primary to upper-primary levels.
- ❑ The assessment generated mixed findings regarding attendance. While several teachers and stakeholders perceived that school meals encourage regular school participation, only 43% of students reported a noticeable improvement in attendance, and a majority reported no significant change. This suggests that attendance is influenced by multiple external factors, including household circumstances, illness, migration, seasonal employment, and social conditions, making it difficult to directly attribute changes in attendance to the Akshaya Patra MDM project alone. In contrast, student retention and continued engagement with schooling are more meaningful long-term indicators of educational impact.

Project photographs



Snacks provided to the schools via the project support



Plates provided to schools

Preparation for loading of meal containers



Meals at the school



Storage room



Thank you

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