

Impact Assessment of Marico's Jalashay Program for FY 2022

April 2023



Figure: Farm pond constructed in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu

Marico’s Jalashay program

The Jalashay program forms a part of Marico’s water stewardship efforts. The program began after a major drought that affected Tamil Nadu around 2018. As part of this program, Marico supports farmers in constructing farm ponds wherein the cost per m³ of excavation is borne by both Marico and the farmer. Marico pays Rs 48 per m³ of excavation and the farmer pays Rs 8 per m³. As on date, around 600 farm ponds have been constructed. The objectives of the program are as follows:

- **Objective 1:** Promote effective conservation and management of water across the country
- **Objective 2:** Replenish more water back to the community than that Marico uses for its operations by capacity creation.

Evaluation approach & methodology

Evaluation approach	
Evaluation objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine impact of the program in FY 2022 • To provide recommendations for the program. 	
Study area	Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts)
Nature of the study	Qualitative study using KIs (Key Informant Interviews), and field observations
Beneficiaries interacted with	Farmers, Gram Panchayat members, Field Service Personnel, Marico team members

Aspects evaluated based on OECD Framework:	
▪ Relevance:	The need for the Jalashay program
▪ Coherence:	Program alignment with the current government schemes and policies, and international goals.
▪ Effectiveness:	Achievement of Jalashay program’s objectives, barriers and challenges in implementation
▪ Sustainability:	Mechanisms for ensuring the continuance after the program exits
▪ Impact:	Intended and unintended change that the program seeks to bring.
▪ Efficiency:	Assessment of the optimum use of financial resource was not part of the scope of this evaluation so this aspect was not considered.

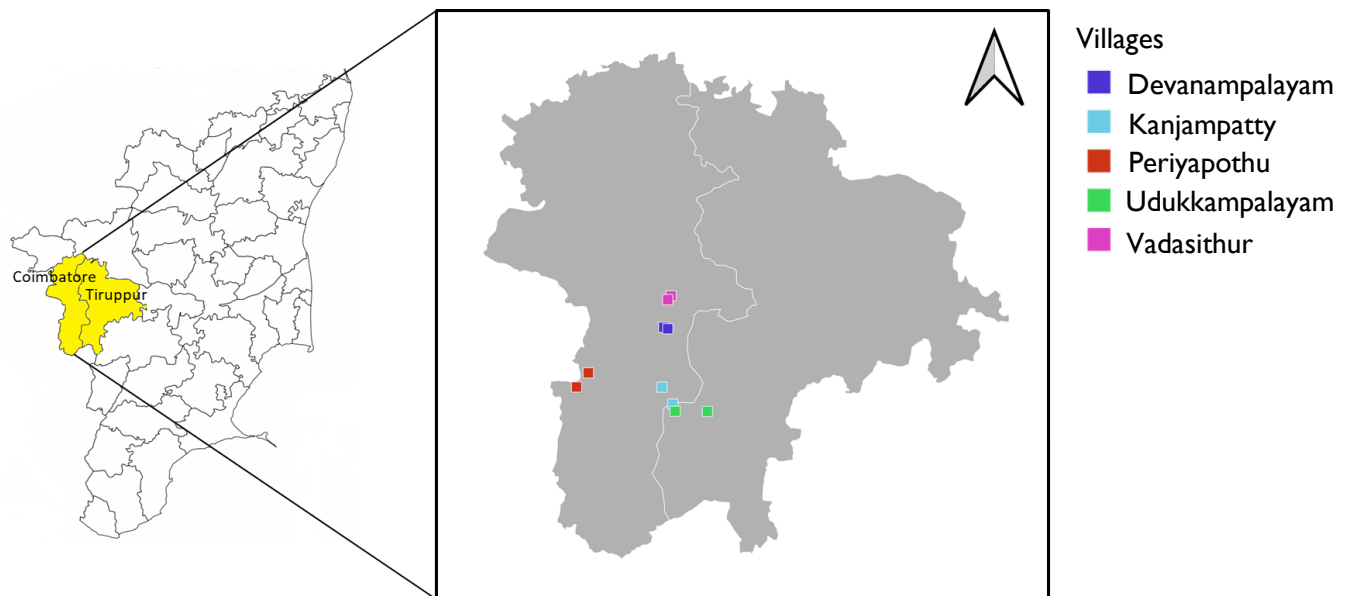


Figure: Locations of the farm ponds evaluated

The Jalashay program is relevant in terms of helping coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu (a water stressed state) become water secure

Tamil Nadu has been facing severe water stress for several years owing to changes in the hydrological cycle, pollution of water, etc. There has been heavy extraction of groundwater over and above the recharge. During the period from 2015 to 2020, the percentage of safe blocks has declined from 35.6 % to 25.2% while the semi-critical blocks have gone up by a similar percentage. Over-exploitation has already occurred in more than a third of the blocks (35.8%) while eight blocks (2%) have turned saline.

Majority of the districts in Tamil Nadu have the drought frequency between 5 and 9 years. Furthermore, there is high probability of increase in the frequency and intensity of climate related natural hazards due to climate change. Tamil Nadu is potentially highly sensitive and vulnerable to climate change and its impacts.

The Jalashay program is relevant in terms of helping coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu become water secure.

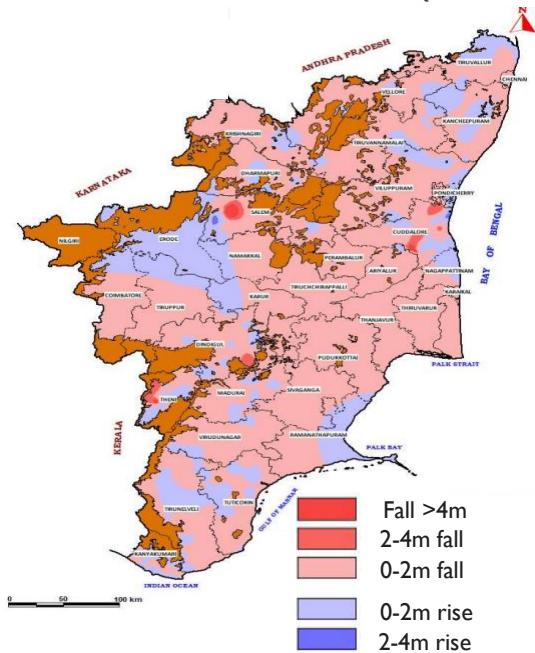


Figure: GW trend in TN (May '12-May '21)

The Jalashay program is aligned with several SDGs and government priorities

The Jalashay program is currently aligned with SDG 1.5 (Build resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters), SDG 6.4 (Increase water use efficiency and ensure freshwater supplies) and SDG 12.2 (Sustainable management and use of natural resources).

Though the program is aligned with government priorities such as 'Per Drop More Crop', 'Har Khet Ko Pani' (Water for every farm), and Jal Jeevan Mission, alignment between the program and with government initiatives for undertaking integrated watershed development can be strengthened. The program currently does not undertake integrated planning in consultation with the gram panchayat members and other stakeholders at the watershed level.

In terms of linkages with Marico's internal sustainability goals, the Jalashay program is linked to the company's water neutrality goal. The company aims to achieve certified water-neutral operations across all its manufacturing facilities by offsetting 100% of its consumption volume with capacity created for community use.



Figure: SDGs aligned with the program

Going forward...

Regional water security cannot be achieved without the collective effort of all stakeholders involved. Considering this, the program can explore a more collaborative approach of watershed development between farmers, government, and other water users. This would bring synergy to watershed development, and with combined efforts, all concerned stakeholders can work together, towards increasing the regional water security.

The program is currently focused on ensuring water security of individual coconut farmers through construction of farm ponds.

The various reasons for constructing farm ponds given by farmers included storage (of rainfall and runoff), increase in groundwater recharge, and storage of excess canal water that is seasonally received by some farmers. The average depth of the pond constructed is 4-5 feet. On average, water is stored in the structure for 1-3 months during monsoon.

Farm ponds were constructed for farmers on a first come, first serve basis without consideration of hydrogeological parameters such as soil type, aquifer type, etc. The farm ponds provided under the program were unlined, meant to act as recharge structures.

The size of the farm pond was not necessarily based on calculation of the irrigation requirement of the farmer but based on available space. Most of the farm ponds visited were designed based on the natural gradient of the land. Furrows, channels, inlet points, and outlet points were not uniformly observed across all farm ponds visited.

While Jalashay program may benefit an individual farmer, and neighboring farmers, construction of community recharge and storage structures may be beneficial to several users of water in the watershed. It was positive to see that a few farmers are aware of the importance of farm pond structures from the viewpoint of drought proofing their future. A few farmers had plans to line the ponds. Some were considering the use of the farm pond to generate additional income through fish farming.

Farmers who are part of the program have benefited in several ways

Farmers interviewed have reported benefits from the program such as increased recharge of groundwater, increase in speed of recharge, increased availability of water during summer months, etc. In certain cases, farmers have augmented their income through crop diversification. Some farmers are also exploring avenues to augment their income by practicing fish farming by leveraging government support.

Jalashay Program

- In FY 2022, 246 farm ponds were constructed in 4 districts (Theni, Coimbatore, Virudhunagar and Tiruppur) under the program
- In FY 2022, an estimated 48 crore liters of water storage capacity was created under the program
- Most farmers who are part of the program reported benefits such as increased recharge to groundwater and increased availability of water in summers.

In terms of the objectives that were fulfilled in FY 2022:

- Objective 1, i.e., promoting effective conservation and management of water across the country was not necessarily achieved. Augmenting water supply does not directly translate to conservation and management of water resources.
- Objective 2, i.e., replenishing more water back to the community than that Marico uses for its operations by capacity creation has been achieved, as reported by Marico.

Going forward...

In order to improve effectiveness, the Jalashay program should undertake a more scientific approach in designing, planning, and implementing the program. For e.g., a scientific approach can be adopted for selection of project sites, selection of the intervention (storage structure or conservation structure), design & construction of farm ponds, etc.

The program is exploring means to strengthen aspects of sustainability

There is no system of accountability in place for the operation and maintenance of the farm pond structures created, nor prevention of misuse of the structures. Although financing for the farm ponds is leveraged from the farmers, other sources of finance can be explored to scale up the program.

Presently, the Jalashay program addresses needs of farmers without evaluating water resources available in the watershed. Localized, point based, scattered interventions for groundwater recharge cannot guarantee water security at the watershed level.



Figures: Farm ponds visited by the evaluator team

Going forward...

There is a need to undertake a study to establish a scientifically valid baseline for groundwater resources in the region in order to determine quantitative impact of interventions. The sustainability of the intervention can be enhanced by construction of community structures wherein monitoring and maintenance is undertaken by Water User Groups.

Farmer was able to expand his agricultural practice after he received a farm pond



Ravi Kanakaraj , a small farmer from Devanampalayam, faced major water shortages in summer. Annually, he used to spend Rs 18,000 to buy water during the summer season. Through the Jalashay program, in 2018 he constructed a farm pond with storage capacity of 227m³. After construction of the farm pond, he has water during the summer season and does not need to buy water. Additionally, Ravi started intercropping coconut with mulberry. He is able to sufficiently provide water for both crops. He now receives a steady stream of income from mulberry at around Rs 3 lakh annually. He has plans to line his farm pond and undertake fish farming.

After farmer received a farm pond, he has sufficient water for irrigation in his farm



***Nadarajan** faced major water shortages in the past due to which he was never able to provide sufficient irrigation to his coconut trees. He testifies that after he received the farm pond, groundwater recharge has improved, and he now has sufficient water to provide irrigation as per recommended practices. He has also experienced an increase in productivity, from 150 coconuts per tree to 170 coconuts per tree, annually.*

Farmer uses farm pond for the dual purpose of storage and groundwater recharge



***Prabhu**, a farmer from Devanampalayam has adopted a unique model wherein he alternates the use of the farm pond that he received, for both recharge and for storage. During the rainy season, the structure is used to recharge groundwater. During the summer season, he uses a tarpaulin sheet which acts as a temporary lining for the structure enabling him to store water, which he uses for irrigation.....*

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Impact Assessment of Marico's Kalpavriksha Program for FY 2022

April 2023



Figure: A farmer harvesting tender coconut in the Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu

Marico’s Kalpavriksha program

The Kalpavriksha program’s mission is to “Help farmers increase their production and revenue”. It is run by the Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation (PKF), a Non-Profit Organization established by Marico for the welfare of coconut farmers to help them increase their yield. The objectives of the program are as follows:

- **Objective 1:** Enabling higher and sustainable crop yield
- **Objective 2:** Train farmers to handle their farms independently
- **Objective 3:** Convert myth and belief-based farming to scientific farming

Since piloting the program in Tanjavur district (Tamil Nadu) in 2015, it has gradually scaled-up to other states. At present, the program is active in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, & Andhra Pradesh.

The program broadly comprises of the following components:

- **Productivity Improvement Program:** The program involves providing the farmers with knowledge on best practices. Field Service Personnel (FSP), i.e., on the ground agronomists provide hand holding support to the farmers.
- **Agri Business Services:** Farmers avail inputs and services (root feeding, brush cutting and power tilling) at prices lower than the market.
- **Call Centre Services:** The call centre service seeks to provide query resolution to farmers.
- **Kalpavriksha app:** The app provides farmers with information on best practices and market prices. There is also a query resolution feature.
- **Kalpavriksha Knowledge Centre (KKC):** Through the KKC, classroom training sessions are conducted for farmers.

Evaluation approach & methodology

Evaluation approach

Evaluation objectives:

- To determine impact of the program in FY 2022
- To provide recommendations for the program.

Study area Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore & Tiruppur districts); Karnataka (Tumkur district);

Nature of the study Qualitative study using KIs (Key Informant Interviews), and field observations

Beneficiaries interacted with Farmers, Gram Panchayat members, FSPs Marico team members, Agri Business Centre Owner, Government agency, Agricultural institution, Call center manager

Andhra Pradesh (2019)

Farmers enrolled: **1,374**
Acres under program: **5,703**

Karnataka (2020)

Farmers enrolled: **26,711**
Acres under program: **63,574**

Tamil Nadu (2015)

Farmers enrolled: **34,833**
Acres under program: **1,85,942**

Kerala (2022)

Presently, the program is being piloted and tested in Kerala

Figure: Coverage of the Kalpavriksha program

Aspects evaluated as per OECD Framework:

- **Relevance:** Understanding the need for a program focusing on increasing coconut yield and farmer income.
- **Coherence:** Program’s alignment with the current government priorities (policies, schemes, etc.), as well as alignment with international goals like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness of the program in achieving the desired change. Strengths, weaknesses, enablers, barriers, and challenges in program implementation.
- **Sustainability:** Mechanisms for ensuring continuance after the program comes to an end.
- **Impact:** Intended change that the program seeks to bring.
- **Efficiency:** Assessment of the optimum use of financial resource by the program was not part of the scope of this evaluation so this aspect was not considered.

The Kalpavriksha program largely caters to marginal and small farmers

The program is present in the 4 states that together comprise of 88% of the coconut growing area in the country. The program caters largely to marginal and small farmers, since 98% of coconut farm holdings are less than 2 ha. Every 2 in 10 farmers interviewed, were completely reliant on the income obtained from coconut. Coconut producers in India experience several challenges. Some of these include poor access to machinery, price fluctuations, insect infestations, fluctuations in rainfall, access to farm inputs like fertilizer, pesticides, etc.

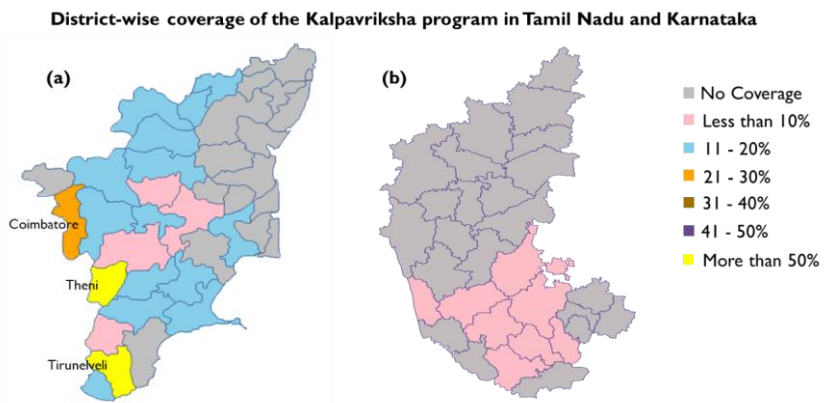


Figure: Penetration of the program in (a) Tamil Nadu and (b) Karnataka, the 2 focus states as of FY 2022

The program, through its various components, helps the farmer tackle some of these challenges by providing guidance and hand holding support on water management, pest management, disease management and nutrition management. The program also helps farmers access farms inputs and services at reduced cost.

The program is aligned with several SDGs and government priorities

The Kalpavriksha program is currently aligned with

- **SDG 2.3** - Doubling the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers,
- **SDG 2.4** - Sustainable food production and resilient agricultural practices,
- **SDG 6.4** - Increase water use efficiency, and
- **SDG 12.2** - Sustainable management and use of natural resources.

The program is also coherent with government policies such as 'Double Farmers Income', 'Per Drop More Crop' and National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture. However, synergy between the program and government schemes can be further strengthened.

In terms of linkages with Marico's internal sustainability goals, the Kalpavriksha program is aligned with Marico's 'Sustainable Coconut Program', the focus of which is to promote sustainable practices in agriculture, such as precision farming. These measures are aimed at improving productivity and enhancing climate resilience, as well as offsetting carbon impact through afforestation programs, across coconut plantations.

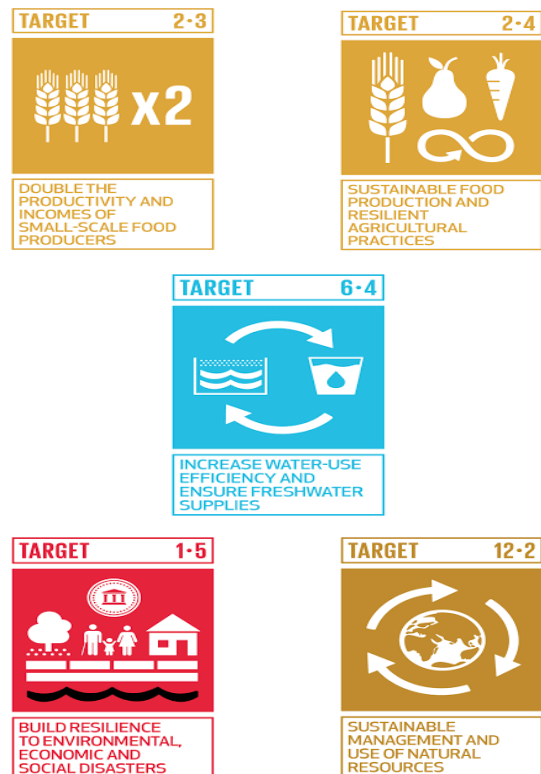


Figure: Alignment of the program with SDGs

Going forward...

- While the program is aligned with government policies, it can be strengthened to support farmers to access government social security schemes (agriculture, water and welfare)

The program's objective of achieving higher and sustainable crop yield has been largely achieved according to insights gathered from the farmers during the evaluation

In terms of the objectives that were fulfilled in FY 2022:

- **Objective 1** was met to an extent. Based on discussion with the farmers, 7 in 10 farmers interviewed reported 25% or more increase in productivity. Several farmers reported an increase in size and weight of coconuts, after joining the program.
- **Objective 2** has presently not been met, although efforts are underway. Most farmers expressed a strong desire to continue receiving program support as they were unsure about future challenges (Eg.: new pests, diseases, etc.) that they may have to tackle.
- **Objective 3:** Scientific farming methods are being promoted, and several farmers responded positively by adopting aspects such as intercropping, drip irrigation, aspects of organic farming, precision agriculture, etc.

In terms of the broader mission, “*Help farmers increase their production and revenue*”, though the program has been successful in increasing coconut productivity, it has not necessarily led to an increase in income for all farmers because of macroeconomic factors.

Farmers in Tamil Nadu utilize root feeding service of the Agribusiness Center, the most

Farmers are satisfied with Agri Business Services (Root feeding, power tilling and brush cutting) and all farmers interacted with mentioned that they receive services at prices lower than the market, thereby helping to reduce cultivation costs to some extent.



Figure: Root feeding service

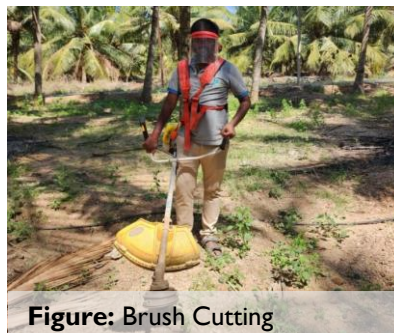


Figure: Brush Cutting



Figure: Power Tilling

The call center registered around 11,948 cases in FY 2022.

Most of the cases were from Tamil Nadu, followed by Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Only 8% of the cases registered in FY 2022 were closed in FY 2022. The call center also provides support to farmers who are not enrolled in the productivity improvement program. Calls are received from other parts of the country such as Telangana, Gujarat, Puducherry and Lakshadweep. Presently, there are more outbound calls made from the centre, than inbound calls received.

As of present, there are 80,000 downloads of the Kalpavriksha app and 26,000 active users.

The app provides information on market rates and best practices. The farmers can request for support through the app, and a case gets registered to the call centre. The call center registers 6 -10 cases per day via the 'Ask an expert' portal on the app.

Going forward...

- There is no debate on the fact that the program is focused on increasing the productivity of farmers. However, the program should evolve from being a productivity focused program to a livelihood enhancement program that promotes the all-round welfare of the farmers.
- Supporting farmers by undertaking more demonstration trainings would help increase farmers' confidence to adopt solutions proposed under the program, and thereby increase productivity.

Farmers who are part of the program have benefited in several ways

As a result of the program, the following outcomes have been observed by RTI from interaction with the farmers and FSPs:

- Increased awareness and knowledge on disease management, pest management, water management and nutrition management.
- Minimization of wastage of resources due to proper awareness. For e.g., several farmers were providing more fertilizer than required. Now they stick to fertilizer application chart prescribed by FSP.
- Increase in income as discussed in the previous section. 5 in 10 farmers interviewed reported an increase in income.

Almost all farmers evaluated reported several benefits after being in the Productivity Improvement Program. Some of these benefits included:

- Helped towards clearing of debts
- Helped in improving standard of living
- Increased ability to hire labour as required
- Helped in saving time
- Helped in decreasing workload

Implementation of the exit strategy will support faster scale up

Though a few enrolled farmers are using call center and app services, the adoption rate for the same can be increased so that dependence on FSPs can be reduced. Most farmers interacted with expect lifelong support from the program. In terms of environmental sustainability, although there are several positive impacts such as improved management of water resources, there is limited focus on improving soil health. While the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers would lead to an increase in productivity, a long-term trade-off may be the deterioration of soil quality and potential groundwater pollution, if not managed properly.



Figure: Picture of a rehabilitated tree before the program (left) and after the program (right)

Going forward...

- There is a need to establish a comprehensive, statistically valid baseline in order to assess the impacts of the program, as well as identify additional areas for expansion.
- The program should undertake a change management exercise to enhance the adoption and use of the call center and Kalpavriksha app services to reduce dependence on FSPs and thereby improve the sustainability of the program.
- Switching to organic farming would improve soil health and soil carbon sequestration, benefitting the environment in the long run.

Copra farmer's income increased such that he could buy new land and clear off his debts



Junjaya is a copra farmer from Muddapura, a village in the Tumkur district of Karnataka. Post joining the program, he noticed that the number of coconuts per tree doubled. He also saw an increase in the weight and size of the coconuts. He attributes the increase in income to the increase in productivity that he experienced. As a result, he was able to pay-off loans that he took to construct his house, and also buy a piece of land to expand his coconut farm. He now plans to buy a tractor as well.

Knowledge is Power



Udaykumar is a gram panchayat member from Koppa. He inherited a 2.5 acre coconut farm that he did not know to care for nor maintain. Once he joined the program, he followed the advice given by the FSP and he has benefitted from it a lot. Per harvest he used to sell 200-300 coconuts, and now, after enrolling in the program, he sells around 2,000 coconuts per harvest.

Kalpavriksha program empowers women



Saraswati is a single mother of two children who are still in school. She enrolled in the program 3 years ago. She testifies that, once she joined the program, there has been an increase in productivity from 15 to 22 coconuts per tree in a single harvest. The increase in productivity has led to an increase in income, and this has helped her towards clearing her debts, and improve her standard of living.

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Impact Assessment of Marico's Nihar Shanti Pathshala Funwala Program for FY 2022

April 2023



Figure 1: Ms. Manisha Yadav taking the English language class in UPS Bhatkol, Rajasthan

Program Overview & Outreach:

The program aims to enable teachers in regional language govt. schools improve their English language teaching skills related to reading, spelling, vocabulary, comprehension, and sentence structuring. The English Literacy Program (ELP) program has 4 levels: Elementary Reading, Advance Reading, Elementary Comprehension, and Advance Comprehension. The fourth level has not been rolled out yet. The targeted beneficiaries are children from class 2 to class 8 studying in these schools. Since inception in 2019, with a few schools in Rajasthan, the program is currently catering to 1.45 lakh children spread across 142 districts in 5 states (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, & Jharkhand) which includes 50 Niti Aayog’s aspirational districts. The states were selected based on the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2018 which reflected the poor status of English literacy in Hindi speaking states.

A Teacher-led Execution Strategy: Teachers are anchor for program execution. It is they who drive the program flow from one stage to the next stage. The program is being rolled-out through the following steps



The program was implemented on a cascading mode, where the Leap For Word (implementation partner) trained the teachers and thereafter the teachers trained the children in the classroom environment. In all the states (except Rajasthan), teacher’s training, & the subsequent handholding was done online. However, in Rajasthan the whole implementation process was offline, with support of field implementation partner (Iptada). Teacher and children in Rajasthan were also provided hardcopies of resource materials which does not happen in other states.

Evaluation methodology & approach

Evaluation objectives:

- To determine impact of the program in FY 2022
- To provide recommendations for the program.

Study area Madhya Pradesh & Rajasthan

Sample schools 8 schools (4 from each state):
 ▪ 6 Upper Primary
 ▪ 2 Primary

Nature of the study Qualitative study using Key Informant’s Interview, Focus Group Discussions, Learning achievement assessment, and Observation of demo classes.

Stakeholders interacted with English teachers (15), Children (69), Parents (12), govt. officials (3), Representatives of Marico & LFW (4).

Aspects evaluated based on OECD Framework:

- **Relevance:** The need for an exclusive English literacy program amongst regional language govt. schools
- **Coherence:** Program’s alignment with the current govt. education policy framework especially in the context of the New Education policy. Extent of co-ordination and ownership of the education system at various levels.
- **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness of the execution strategy (online & offline models) in improving the learning of teachers and students. Strengths, weaknesses, enablers, barriers, and challenges in program implementation.
- **Sustainability:** Mechanisms (e.g., institutionalization) in place for ensuring continuance after the program comes to an end.
- **Impact:** Intended change(s) that the program seeks to bring, within teacher’s and student’s learning levels, i.e., extent to which the program has been able to improve English (reading & writing) skills.
- **Efficiency:** Assessment of the optimum use of financial resource was not part of the scope of this evaluation, so this aspect was not considered.

Competency gap amongst teachers and learning gap amongst children in English, along with its alignment with Gol's Nipun Bharat Program and the New Education Policy, makes the program relevant and coherent, thus increasing its acceptance within the govt. education system.

Improvement in the English language proficiency amongst children in regional language govt. schools, will open-up further avenues for their professional growth. The program seek to catalyze a transformation process from the use of conventional rote learning methods to the use of an innovative phonetic-based learning method by teachers. The ELP aims to improve the skills of both teachers and students through a structured learning process, using phonetics. The use of an online platform, has ensured continued learning even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Use of interactive and multimedia resources has made the learning experience more engaging for children. The program has benefitted children from socially marginalized communities, especially for girls who generally attend govt. schools.

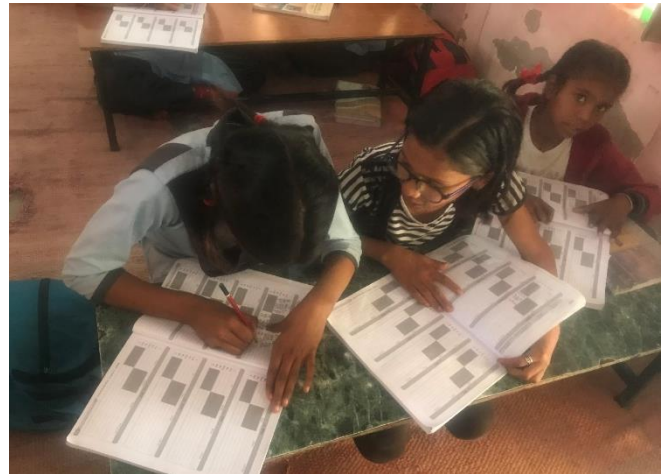


Figure 2: UPS Nagala Samavdi, Rajasthan

The 'Nipun Bharat' initiative of government aims to improve literacy and numeracy skills in children up to grade 3, with a focus on English language. The teachers clearly articulated that the resource materials provided under the program are easier use as compared to the material provided under Nipun Bharat. The concepts and methods introduced under the ELP modules can be easily used, while teaching the SCERT textbooks. Though the govt. authorities are aware of the ELP, there is further scope for increasing their participation in the planning, review, & monitoring mechanisms. The ELP is working towards embedding indicators into the MIS of the state education dept. Overall, ELP has the potential to improve foundational literacy by boosting teacher's confidence and improving children's interest for English language.

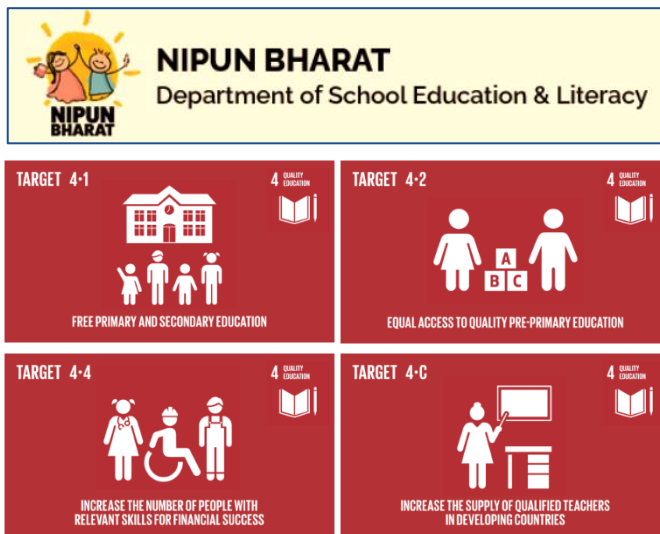


Figure 3: Alignment with SDGs and Policy Environment

Going forward...

- Under the Nipun Bharat program, it is mandated by the govt. to improve English foundational literacy. However, the Nipun Bharat is relatively a new initiative, and the govt. is therefore looking for support from external agencies for its effective implementation. Therefore, repositioning the English literacy program as a technical support program to Nipun Bharat, will help in avoiding duplication of effort as well as improving the program's visibility and ownership at a national level.
- Once the ELP takes the form of a technical support initiative, it would not be a challenge to incorporate the current modules into the Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) curriculum, which is already being mandated for teachers within the govt. schools. This will further institutionalize the planning and monitoring processes and enhance the teacher's accountability towards rolling out of the modules regularly.

Program quality can be further improved by rationalizing the scale of operations looking at the human resource availability and balancing the use of online & offline modes for teachers' engagement.

The ELP was delivered both in online and offline modes, and while some teachers preferred the online approach, others preferred the offline approach. However, all the teachers agreed that the program's content and methodology was useful and had the potential to address English learning gaps, when delivered effectively.

Though the online mode has helped the program reach almost all primary and upper primary schools in the operational states, quality concerns remain in pockets. A relatively small implementation team faces the overwhelming task of mustering teacher support, ensuring data quality, monitoring the effective rolling-out of the modules, and facilitating campaigns at regular intervals. At times, a call-center person engages with as high as 4,000 - 5,000 teachers during a year, making it challenging for them to ensure a meaningful engagement.

Another programmatic challenge is the time constraints face by govt. teachers due to their current workload, which includes both academic and non-academic commitments. This challenge has been addressed by enabling teachers to integrate the phonetic-based concepts into regular school curriculum.

In all the operational states, except Rajasthan, the teachers and the children relied on digital version of the resource materials (concept books & workbooks) shared via WhatsApp. Lack of smartphones, limited internet connectivity, and cost implication of printing these materials have deterred both teacher and students from fully utilizing these material. The socio-economic backgrounds of students & disinterested parents have also created some roadblocks for the program from time-to-time.



Fig.4: Teachers, UPS Bhatkol, Rajasthan



Fig. 5: Class, UPS Bhatkol, Rajasthan



Fig. 6: Parents, UPS Saiyad colony, Alwar, Rajasthan

Going forward...

- The need to introduce a physical (offline) supportive supervision system for teachers and that too at scale can only be achieved by leveraging the existing govt. cadres within the education system. Capacitating and engaging cluster level cadre within the education system (for e.g., Jan Siksha Adhikari in Madhya Pradesh), for providing in-person supportive supervision to teachers in rolling-out the modules must be done. The current online teachers' support system can complement the in-person support by the govt. cadre.
- Providing hard copies of teaching & learning material will certainly improve the learning process. There is a need to explore the possibility of printing workbooks for children using other resources (especially leveraging resources from Nipun Bharat and Sarwa Siksha Abhiyan).
- The program team must ensure active engagement with community, especially parents for providing enabling ecosystem to the child and improving teacher's accountability by creating community-based monitoring of the program. Scaling-up of innovative initiatives like 'Teacher Entrepreneurs' which LFW is already piloting, may ensure the continuance of English learning beyond school hours.

Program alignment with NBP and its formal buy-in by the state education dept., make it a sustainable initiative. However, its impact on teachers is higher than the impact on children.**

Learning assessment of 69 children was conducted across the 3 levels (ER, AR, & EC)*. The graph (fig. 7) shows that the score of children in MP is significantly higher than the score of children in Rajasthan in the first two level (ER & AR). The reason can be attributed to the fact that in MP, the first level (i.e., ER) is still being rolled out with children up to class 5 and the second level (i.e., AR) is being rolled out with children up to class 8. The third level is hardly being executed in MP. However, in Rajasthan the level of execution is more age and grade appropriate,. That implies that in Rajasthan, level 1 (ER) is being rolled out with class 2 and 3, level 2 (AR) is being rolled out with class 4 and 5, and level 3 (EC) is being rolled out with class 6 to 8. The children appearing in the test in MP were much older in age and grade compared to Rajasthan. This was the major factor behind the higher scores in MP.

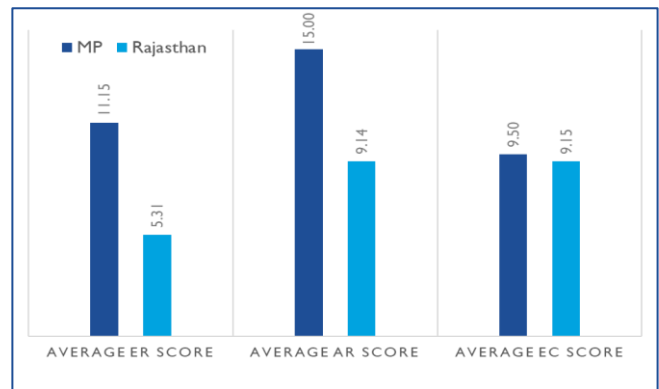


Figure 7: Average learning achievement score at each learning level of the program (scores obtained out of 30)

Though there is still a lot of scope for improvement in the learning outcomes of the children, however the program has increased the skills and confidence of English teachers, particularly those from Hindi medium backgrounds. The use of phonetic concepts has increased children's interest and confidence in reading and writing English words and sentences, while reducing their apprehensions for the subject.

The ELP implementation team is working in close collaboration & partnership with the state education dept. Moreover, a significant investment of resources has been done on capacitating govt. teacher. These two aspects make the program sustainable. The program has been well-received by teachers and has generated sustained interest within the education system up to the highest level in the state, through various events and campaigns at regular interval (like quizzes and the word power championship).



Figure 8: Learning Achievement Test, MP schools

Going forward...

- By creating successful models and demonstrating the change that can be brought using the approach, govt. can be encouraged to scale-up the program using its own resources, under the umbrella of Nipun Bharat. That would contribute positively to the sustainability of the program. This can be done by increased investment on schools with 'champion' teachers to create such models, which can have a ripple effect on other teachers. This will also create a significant number of model schools for influencing the govt. and other sector players for increased investment and replication of the ELP model.
- The impact of the ELP can be enhanced through a structured student evaluation system. It would be useful to introduce a system of periodic evaluation of the learning levels of children using a technology-based solutions. This evaluation tool should also be able to help teachers understand if the child is ready to move to the next level of learning.
- There is a need to re-strategize the implementation process to improve the quality of classroom learning for the children, thus moving improving their overall English learning outcomes. Reallocation of available financial resources may be required to increase the on-ground presence of the program.

Champion of change...



Ms. Bhanushree Malakar is an English teacher in Saokheda Primary school (Madhya Pradesh) where the ELP is being implemented. Prior to the ELP, she was using a conventional approach for teaching English which focused on rote learning. She is now convinced that the phonetics-based approach adopted by the ELP is innovative and easy for both teachers and students.

Bhanushree has been mentoring and handholding junior teachers so that the first level of the module can be rolled-out to children of standards 2 and 3 effectively. During the evaluation it was found that learning levels of the children in this school was relatively better than other schools. Champion change agents like Bhanushree have proven that if there is a willingness in the teachers then the ELP can be rolled out in the most effective manner despite all challenges faced by govt. school-teachers.

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Impact Assessment of Marico's Skill Academy for FY 2022

April 2023



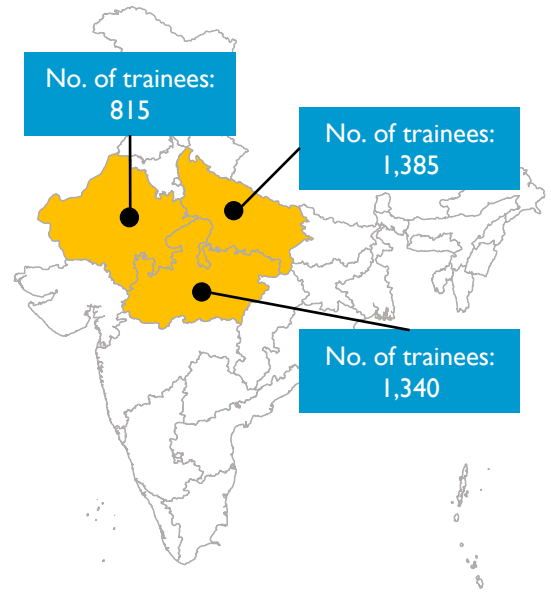
Figure 1: Trainees of the Customer Care Executive trade

Marico's Skill Academy

The Skill Academy was a vocational training program for women delivered by Centum Learning, in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, with support of Marico in FY 2022. The program covered 3,540 women over a period of five-month (Aug 2021- Jan 2022). The program aimed to achieve two objectives:

- Firstly, to upskill women on multiple competencies to make them financially independent; and
- Second, to handhold women in learning the skill at their own pace.

The program was conducted online with support of external trainers. Each training was intended to be for a total of 100 hours (60 hours of classroom training and 40 hours of on-the-job training).



Evaluation approach & methodology

Evaluation approach

Evaluation objectives:

- To determine impact of the program in FY 2022
- To provide recommendations for the program.

Study area Udaipur (Rajasthan) and Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)

Nature of the study Qualitative study using KIIs (Key informant interviews)

Stakeholders Trainees (16), trainers (2), Implementing agency team (2), Owners of the sub-contracting agency (2)

Aspects evaluated based on OECD Framework:

- **Relevance:** Need for the program for women which would provide remote skill training and job opportunities.
- **Coherence:** Program alignment with current government policies for skill development like National Policy on Skill development (2015)
- **Effectiveness:** Effectiveness of the execution strategy in providing skill training and job placements. Strengths, weaknesses, enablers, barriers, and challenges in program implementation.
- **Sustainability:** Extent to which the trainings ensured sustainable livelihood
- **Impact:** Intended change that the program seeks to bring in terms of skill and income.
- **Efficiency:** Assessment of the optimum use of financial resource was not part of the scope of this evaluation so this aspect was not considered.

The program was relevant considering the lack of women's participation in the workforce.

World Bank data reveals that even though the Indian economy has grown more than 10 times since 1990, its female workforce participation has fallen from 30% in 1990 to 19% as of 2021. The fall has been particularly steep in the past 15 years when female workforce participation plunged from 32% in 2005 to 19% in 2021. Hence, the Marico Skill Academy initiative was aptly designed to ensure skill enhancement and job opportunities for women, i.e., empower women by making them self-sufficient and financial independent.

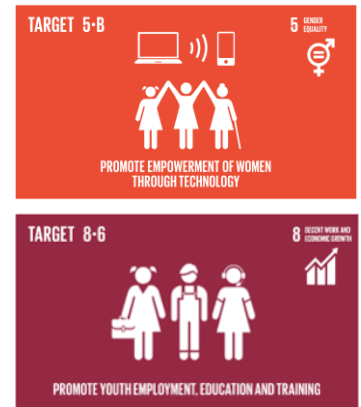
The program was found to be relevant, especially in the post COVID pandemic scenario, i.e., the program was delivered completely online, making it accessible to all women despite movement restrictions enforced during the pandemic.

The program module consisted of 100 hours of teaching comprising of 60 hours of classroom learning and 40 hours of on-the-job training. However, during the evaluation, it was observed that on-the-job training and placement support could not be provided to all trainees due to mobility restrictions enforced by the government and economic downturn as a result of the pandemic. Though placement results were not encouraging, 85% of the participants evaluated stated that their confidence was increased after attending the program. Moreover, computer literacy and communication has helped a few participants secure jobs in other sectors.

The program is coherent with the government's policy for skill development and promoting entrepreneurship

The program was in alignment with SDG 5(B), i.e., empowering women through technology; and SDG 8.6, i.e., promoting youth employment, education, and training.

Though the program did not formally collaborate with any government body while rolling out the training in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, it was completely in alignment with the skill development vision of the Government. The program was conceptualized in-tune with the National Policy of Skill development (2015), giving due consideration to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Additionally, the resource material used in the training were the one developed by Govt. of India under the National Skill Mission and available in the public domain.



The effectiveness of the program was hindered due to limited program monitoring because of restricted mobility during the pandemic

The program was envisioned with the objective of making young women self-reliant and financially independent through skill training and job placement. The project fell short of achieving the desired impact due to various external factors, beyond the control of the project:

- Firstly, the program was designed for Pre-COVID times. Despite making the necessary adaptations in the implementation strategy, on-the-job training and placement support could not be provided to all trainees due to the negative implications of the pandemic.
- Secondly, the program was subcontracted by the main partner, Centum Learning, to regional agencies like Mahur education (Udaipur), and Pioneer Computer Institute (Bhopal). Mobility restrictions posed by the pandemic, necessitated the need to hire local agencies to execute the trainings.

Outsourcing the training to local agencies, as a means of circumventing mobility restrictions during the pandemic, together with restricted field monitoring visits by the main partner impacted the overall effectiveness of the program execution.

As a part of the evaluation, a few trainees were assessed on skill enhancement. It was found that, majority of the trainees believed that their communication skill and technical skills (basic computer skills) had improved. Most of the beneficiaries stated that although they could not work in the BPO sector, better communications and behavioural skills have helped them to secure jobs in other sectors. Few trainees also stated that even though they were taught basic computers skills, they could not master it due to lack of practise.

Some of the trainees evaluated, who had just started work, stated that they feel empowered within their community as they were self-reliant, i.e., they did not have to depend on their parents.

Overall, though the impact of the program was sub-optimal, select individual success stories witnessed during the evaluation is indicative of the impact the program would have achieved if the macro-economic conditions were more conducive.

The program adapted itself to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The program was conceptualized for pre-COVID scenario to train young women and support them with job placements. After the second wave of COVID, the program was adapted to meet the challenges posed by pandemic. Despite this, the program was unable to create the desired impact in terms of job placements because of the economic downturn post the pandemic. Though a few placements were offered, due to lack of on-the-job training, the trainees were unable to perform on the job and eventually quit. Most of trainees evaluated also stated that they would have preferred a refresher course or an offline program with industry experts to understand the nuances of the trade.

The sustainability of the program was constrained by implementation bottlenecks resulting from the circumstances created by the pandemic.

The Skilling Program had many attributes which would have made it sustainable. For example, skilling in areas having high market demand, on-the-job-training, placement support, etc. However, due to the pandemic, the implementation of the program was adversely impacted, i.e., on-the-job-training, and placement support could not be extended to all trainees. As a result, though the trained received class room training, they were not prepared to tackle real world on-the-job challenges.

Going forward...

- Future skilling program should be an optimal blend of online and offline to ensure effective learning.
- Future programs should employ a screening process to identify participants, who are likely to benefit the most out of the program
- One of aspects of the program that could be further strengthened is rigorous monitoring to ensure timely course correction to tackle any implementation roadblocks

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