

BHARAT CAREER ASPIRATIONS REPORT

2023



Deep dive into career aspirations,
opportunities and challenges of
students from marginalised
communities in India.

Bharat Career
Aspirations Report
Published June 2023

Foreword

Dear Readers,

I am thrilled to share this insightful report on the career aspirations of students from marginalized communities in India who face diverse social, economic, cultural, and political challenges and have limited access to resources. Yet, they seek opportunities to create a brighter future for themselves and their families.

This report serves two primary objectives. Firstly, it aims to gauge the career awareness levels of students based on the specified parameters and to understand how these levels vary by gender from grade 9 to 12. Secondly, it endeavours to shed light on the demand for and accessibility of professional career counselling in India, particularly during this crucial and transformative phase of students' lives.

This comprehensive survey covered a sample size of 5225 students from grades 9-12 and belonging to families with low household incomes in 16 Indian states with an MPI index value above or equal to 0.053. It aimed to understand their career goals and the challenges in pursuing them. With a particular focus on higher education and career choices, we set out to explore how different factors, especially gender, influence their career decisions.

The survey was designed to measure their career awareness levels across seven key parameters. These parameters encompassed their understanding of aptitude, personality, and interest areas; analysis of strengths and weaknesses; knowledge about various career pathways; information on available courses, duration, and expenses; and exploration of alternative opportunities as backup plans.



The survey findings have provided profound insights into these students' career aspirations and challenges. It is disheartening to discover that very few students receive professional career guidance, resulting in a fraction of them developing a holistic understanding of career options, education pathways, and the duration and financial runway required to pursue desired careers.

These findings become alarming when we consider only about 4.06% of female students and 4.02% of male students from grade 12 were able to answer advanced questions related to the career they are interested in, emphasizing the pressing need for comprehensive career guidance and support for these students, particularly during their crucial academic years.

iDreamCareer has known right from the start that timely interventions in the career guidance space can make a transformative impact on the lives of students, and the results of the Bharat Career Aspirations Report 2023 reinforce this belief.

Even today, many students lack access to professional counselling and resources that can help them make informed career choices. By understanding their aspirations, strengths, and weaknesses, we can create targeted interventions that foster their personal and professional growth, creating equal opportunities and resources for all students, regardless of socioeconomic background or gender.

Only then can we truly harness the talent and potential of the next generation of Bharat.

I extend my most profound appreciation to all the students who participated in this study and the dedicated iDC social impact team who conducted the survey and analyzed the data. This report has illuminated an important issue and paved the way for meaningful change.

Also, I sincerely thank all our partners for their unwavering support in our mission to empower the aspirations of the students of incredible India.

With Warm Regards,
Ayush Bansal



We thank you for your ongoing support of our program

We recognize and thank all those who have contributed to the preparation and launch of the Bharat Career Aspirations Report (BCAR). Without their vital support and time, this would not have been possible.

Probex Management Consulting Pvt. Ltd - for their expertise in structuring the entire process, and designing the survey & reports.

We acknowledge and extend our sincere gratitude to all our CSR and NGO partner organizations for helping us in the data collection process to ensure the authenticity of the data.

Our career counsellors, for their vital support and guidance throughout the year and for helping out students understand the purpose of the survey.

Mr. Paul Basil, Founder of Villgro & Co-Founder, Menterra Venture Advisors for his vision, advice and shaping this initiative.

Our impact investors, Menterra Venture Advisors, Gray Matters Capital, and Artha Impact for their invaluable support in propelling the iDreamCareer vision forward.

Finally, this report could not have been created without the time and participation of all the students who responded to the survey.

We hope the findings of this report will help stakeholders develop policies, programs, and products to shape the aspirations of Bharat.

In deep gratitude.
Team iDreamCareer



About Bharat Career Aspirations Report

In the 2023 edition of the World Happiness Report, India has improved its ranking to 126th position out of 137 countries in comparison to the 135th position in the 2022 report. Among the numerous factors that contribute significantly to this low happiness index, job dissatisfaction is a major one. One major challenge* with Indian families, especially those from marginalized communities has been that we make choices by limiting ourselves to the narrow spectrum of opportunities that we are familiar with.

Lack of self-awareness, career awareness & job dissatisfaction among students is a

major challenge that has been neglected so far. The purpose of the Bharat Career Aspirations Report 2022-23 is to understand the career aspirations, existing gaps, and status of awareness level among the students from class 9th-12th with a diverse social & cultural background falling under household income range of 1.4 lakh - 3.4 lakh per annum.

This report is prepared by iDreamCareer with the support and guidance of Probex Management Consulting Pvt. Ltd working in the domain of Monitoring and Evaluation for the last 10 years.



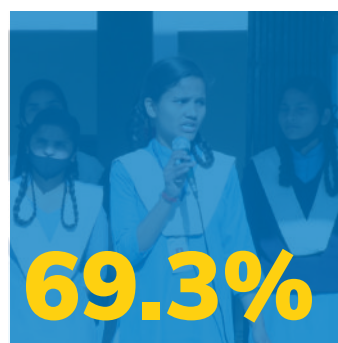
STATES



RESPONDENTS



FROM LOW
INCOME FAMILIES



FEMALE
PARTICIPANTS



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Executive Summary

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the career aspirations of the students of class 9th to 12th living in diverse social, economic, cultural & political environments. The participants in the survey are from the marginalized section of society with challenging economic conditions & limited or no accessibility to resources essential to pursue their dreams.

The key focus area of this report is to get some insights around-

1. What kind of aspirations do these students have in terms of higher education & career?

2. How different factors, specifically gender, influence the career-related choices of these students.



Key Parameters

To conduct this study a survey is designed which will focus on 07 key parameters to measure their career awareness level. These parameters are:

1. Understanding Aptitude, Personality & Interest areas.
2. Analysis of strengths & weaknesses.
3. Information about different career pathways under a career cluster.
4. Information about the courses that students can enrol in.
5. Information about the number of years required to complete the course.
6. Information about the expenditure required to complete the course.
7. Information about alternative opportunities aligned with their main career(backup plan).

Objectives

1

To understand students' awareness level

The first objective of this report is to measure the career awareness level of the students based on 07 key parameters and how it changes with gender from grade 9th to 12th.

2

To understand the need & accessibility of professional career counseling in India

The second objective of this study is to understand the demand side of career counselling for students in their most critical & decisive phase of life and how accessible it is in india.

Methodology

Students from 9th to 12th grade who are from families with low household income residing across 16 states with MPI index value above or equal to 0.053 are the participants in the survey.

37199

were given the opportunity to complete the survey.

~19%

participants responded to the survey.

5225

was the sample size of students who were selected post data cleaning process.



The students were made aware of the purpose of the survey and their informed consent was taken.

Respondent's profile

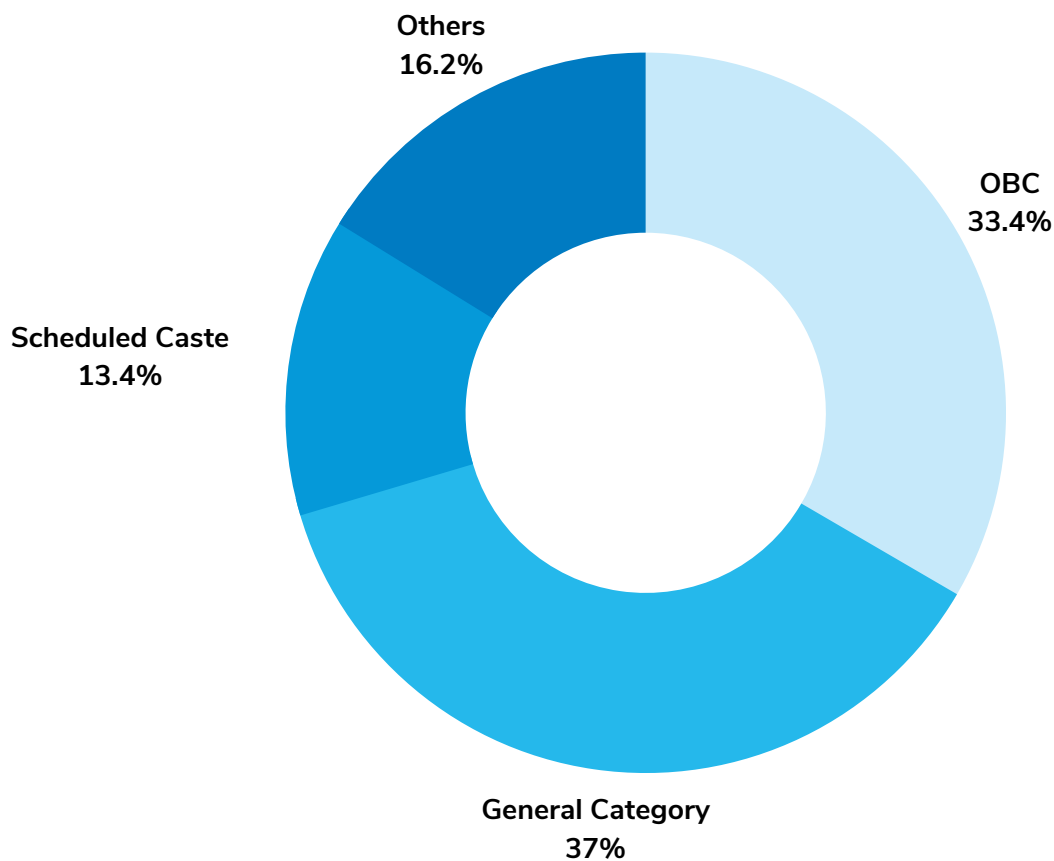
69% respondents are female students from class 9th - 12th.

33.4% of the total participants belong to Other Backward Communities(OBCs) followed by 37% from general category & 13.4% from Scheduled caste.

96.7% of respondents belong to families with annual household incomes less than 3.4L/Year.

53.4% of respondents are studying in government schools and 42.1% are from affordable private schools.

GRADE	FEMALE	MALE
08	0.2%	0.1%
09	19.8%	21.7%
10	19.0%	17.1%
11	24.9%	22.6%
12	36.2%	38.5%



Based on category

Survey Findings

4%

respondents from 12th grade are able to answer advanced questions related to their chosen career.

65%

respondents do not have any backup plan as per the responses in the survey.

31.4%

male students chose **Engineering** as their main career choice.

20%

female students chose **Medical Science** as their main career

13.2%

respondents have received career guidance from a trained professional.

77.1%

students have chosen only 6 career clusters out of 41 career choices as their main career under the professional career choices.

13.8 %

of the participants have used tools like SWOT etc to identify their core strengths areas and weaknesses.

10%

of the respondents are able to answer basic career awareness questions like courses, pathways, years required to pursue the career of their interest.

Gender plays a significant role in the career journey.

The World Economic Forum's gender gap report 2022, that India was ranked at 135th position out of 146 countries ([Report link](#)).

Status of India- From 30.7% in 2006, the proportion of working-age women taking part in paid work dropped to 19.2% in 2021, according to the World Bank. One of the reasons for this drop is Education attainment and Economic growth/cyclical effects.

Only

10.5%

female respondents were able to answer basic questions related to their chosen main career.

Only

10.9%

male respondents were able to answer basic questions related to their chosen main career.

66%

female students have chosen only 05 career clusters out of 41 choices as their main career under the professional career choices.

75%

male students have chosen only 05 career clusters as their main career under the professional career choices.

50.4%

female students have chosen only 03 career clusters out of 41 choices as their main career under the vocational career choices.

55%

male students have chosen only 03 career clusters as their main career under the vocational career choices.

20%

female students have chosen Medical Science as the top choice under professional career clusters.

26%

Beauty & wellness is the top choice under vocational career clusters

20.8%

IT enable & technical emerges as the top career choice under vocational career cluster with

31.4%

male students have chosen Engineering as their top career choice under professional career clusters.

Access to Career Counseling

Only **13%** of the respondents have received career guidance from a trained professional

The term

“Career Counselling”

is not that common in our Indian society. Students getting proper career guidance from a professional is far less as compared to other countries. The challenge here is at both ends i.e. supply and demand side.



Supply Side:

The US has an average counsellor to students ratio of 1:492 i.e. one counsellor on 492 students) as compared to India there is just 01 counsellor in 50000 students. This identifies the existing gap in the career counselling domain -perceived as the counselling-deficit sector.*

Demand Side:

Lack of awareness among students, parents, school administrations, and other key stakeholders about the significance and importance of career counselling is also a major challenge.

Lack of professional career guidance or getting it through untrained or biased channels, not based on any scientific or rational process, leads to career dissatisfaction in the future. Hence, there is a need to set up a career guidance system at different levels across the nation to nudge students, spread awareness, and train more counsellors to solve this neglected but critical problem that exists.

Status of Career Awareness

This section will cover the awareness level of the students around careers they are interested in pursuing in 03 parts:

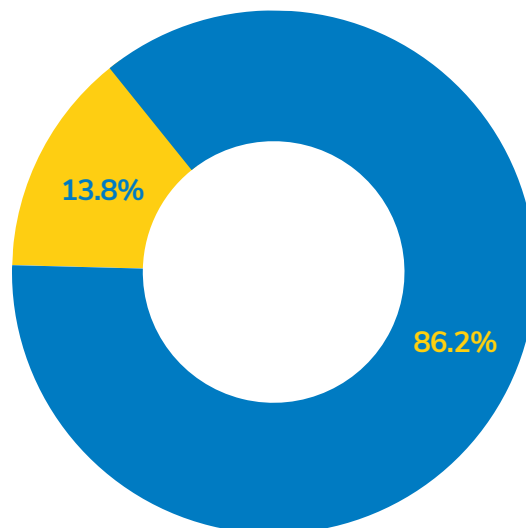
Self- Awareness:

Understanding one's aptitude, personality types & interest areas with the identification of strengths & weaknesses using tools like psychometric assessment and SWOT analysis is the first step towards identifying a right-fit career.

We did ask respondents to list down their strengths and weaknesses and it was absolutely clear that their understanding of basic terms such as what strength & weakness means is not accurate. These responses indicate that there is a clear need to support them with these tools and their effective use.

13.8%

of the participants have used tools like SWOT, Psychometric assessment to identify their core strengths areas, and weaknesses.



86.2%

of the respondents have never used any tool to identify their strengths or weaknesses and the majority of these students never thought about this while deciding about any career.

86.8%

of the respondents consider guidance from school teachers, family members, relatives, and friends as career guidance.

01st Dimension

is having information about diverse career opportunities available in the market. It is about knowing more and more careers. This is called “world of careers” in the report.

02nd Dimension

is once you understand what kind of career to pursue, having information to plan your entire career journey including the resources & support required. This is termed as “career awareness” in the report.

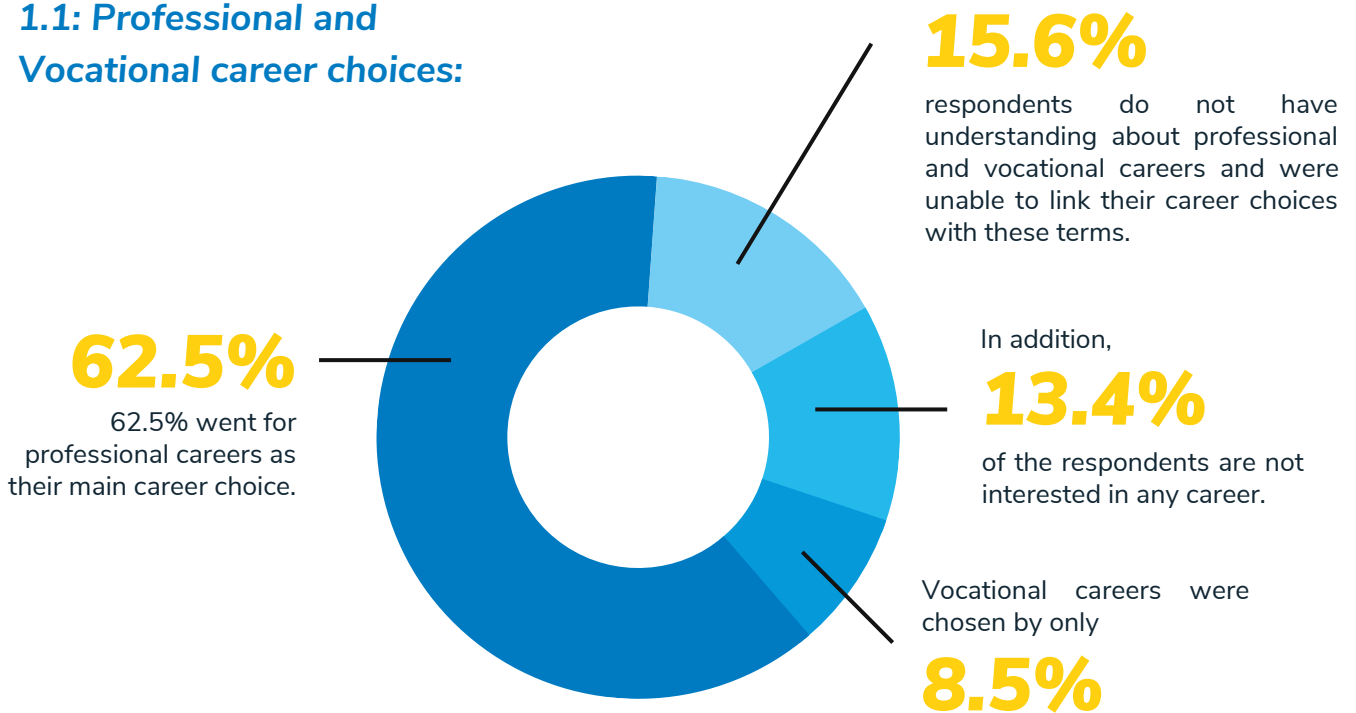
03rd Dimension

is about a well thought backup career plan which is aligned to your area of interest and the main career of your choice. This will fall under the “backup career plan” segment in the report.



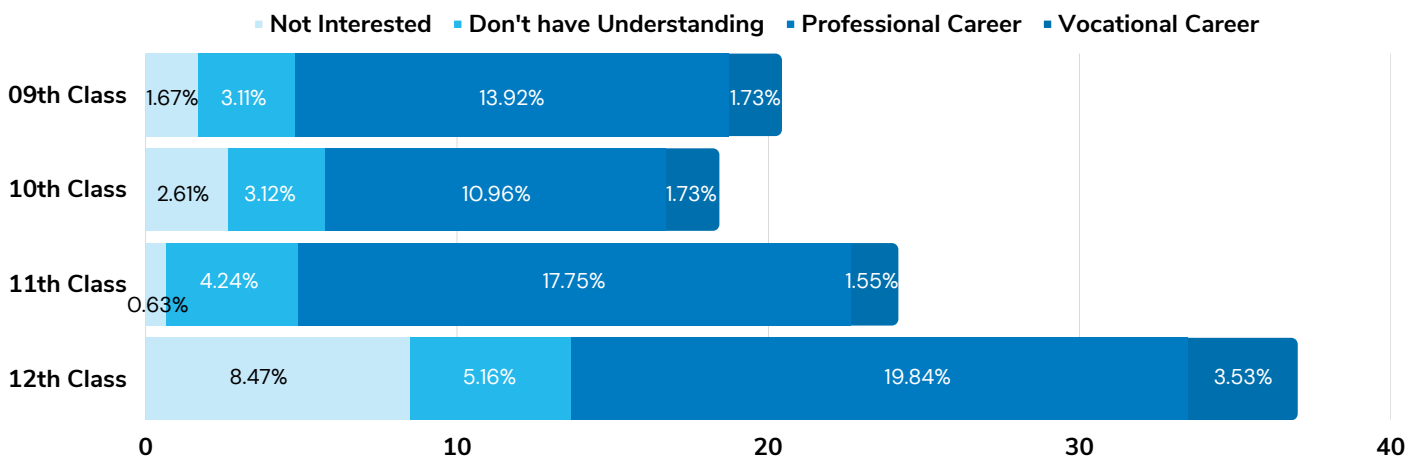
World of Careers

1.1: Professional and Vocational career choices:



Graph 1.0: This graph represents the segregation of career choices as professional and vocational.

Table 1.1: grade-wise segregation of career choices.



Lack of awareness around various vocational careers results in a significantly low proportion of these careers in respondents' choices. Vocational career choices are not more than 3.6% considering all grades. It is highest i.e.3.53% in 12th class & lowest in 9th & 10th class i.e.1.73%. Though, these percentages are 7-10 times lesser than the professional careers in their respective grades.

Need to be aware of all possible solutions that would result in diverse career choices, will empower students, and enhance career satisfaction in the later stage of life.

1.2: Career choices of the respondents.

77.1%

students have chosen only 06 career clusters as their main career under the professional career choices. The top 03 choices are the following:

- Engineering/IT/CSE (18.7%)**
- Medical Science (17.3%)**
- Gov services (15.1%)**

66%

respondents have chosen only 05 career clusters as their main career under the Vocational career choices. The top 03 choices are the following:

- Defence security & services (18.6%)**
- Beauty & Wellness (17.7%)**
- Technical/IT enabled (14.7%)**

Due to a lack of information, knowledge, and proper guidance during this stage of life, the data clearly shows that students are still in the sheep race. Out of 21 career cluster choices under professional careers, more than 71% have chosen just 06 career clusters and more than 50% out of these cover the top 03 careers i.e. Engineering, medical science, and government services. This is no different even in vocational career choices; more than 51% of students have chosen just 03 career choices prevalent in society.

This data indicates the need to have proper guidance in this critical phase of life where each decision leads to some significant consequences. Lack of information, knowledge, and professional intervention leads to a lack of self-awareness, career awareness, and informed decision-making.

FEMALE

66%

Female students have chosen only 05 career clusters as their main career under the professional career choices.

- Medical Science(20%)
- Government services(15%)
- Engineering(~13%)
- Education & Teaching(10%)
- Banking(08%)

50.4%

Female students have chosen only 03 career clusters as their main career under the vocational career choices.

- Beauty & Wellness (~26%)
- Defense security & Gov services (~18%)
- Banking (~10%)

MALE

75%

male students have chosen only 05 career clusters as their main career under the professional career choices.

- Engineering(31.4%)
- Government services(15.2%)
- Business Management(11.4%)
- Medical Science(09.3%)
- Finance & Banking(07.6%)

55%

male students have chosen only 03 career clusters as their main career under the vocational career choices

- Defense security & Gov services (20%)
- IT enabled/technical(20.8%)
- Business Operations(~14%)

Gender influences a wide range of career-related attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes. This also includes the nature of career choices. As mentioned in several reports, millions of girls are deprived of opportunities to build their careers, specifically STEM careers. (UNICEF Article, 2020).

As per the survey, medical science, education & teaching, and banking are unique career choices of female respondents while finance & banking, Business management, and engineering are of male respondents under professional careers. In vocational careers, beauty & wellness emerges as the top choice with a 36% share among 19 other career clusters in female respondents while this is almost negligible in the choices of male respondents.

There is a need for systemic change at the school level specifically at the early stage of school life to support and provide unbiased professional career guidance based on their interest.



Status of Career Awareness

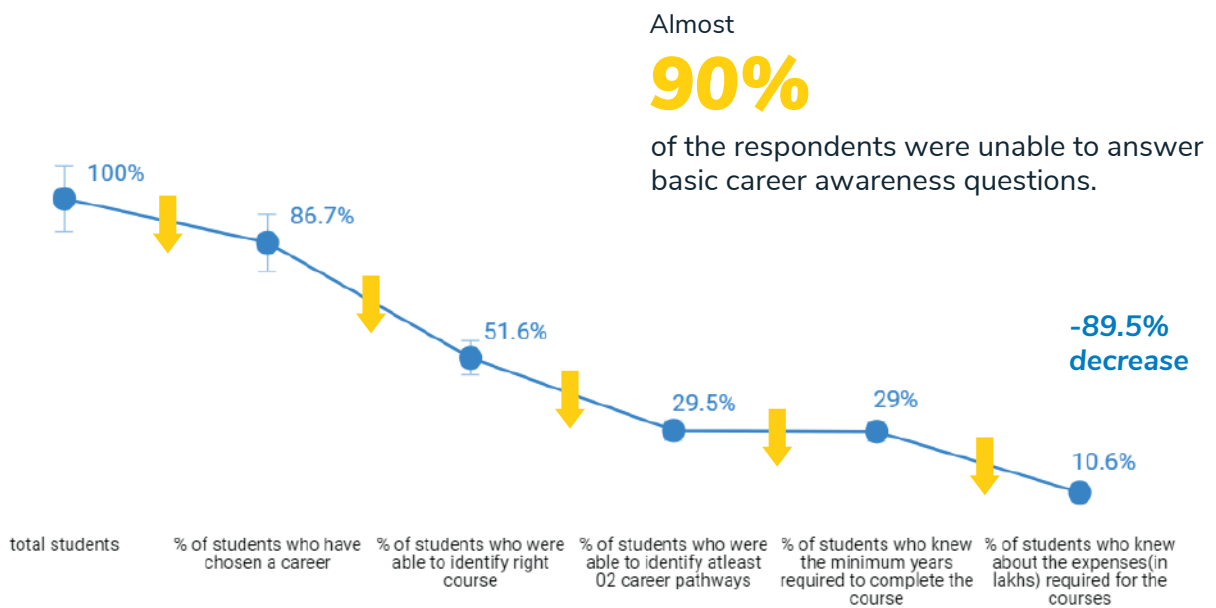
The survey focused on

05 KEY PARAMETERS

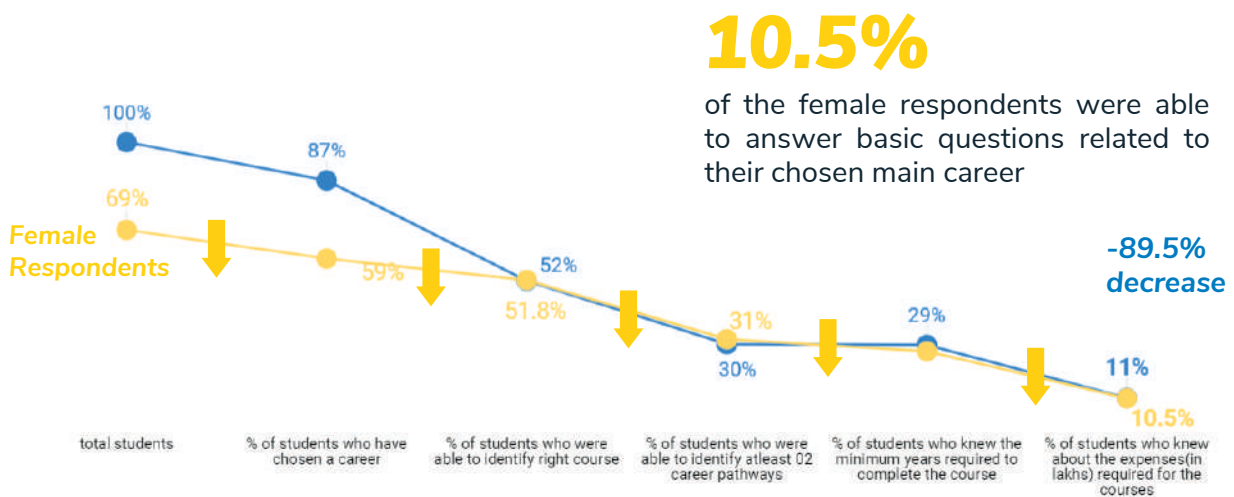
to analyse the awareness level of the respondents about the career cluster/careers they are interested to pursue post-class 12th.

- 1. Career Cluster:** The students selected the career cluster out of 41 choices in the survey based on their career choices. These career clusters cover more than 500 professional & vocational careers.
- 2. Career Pathway:** Awareness about different pathways within the career of a student's choice. For instance, web development, data science, and backend development are different career pathways under IT/computer science.
- 3. Courses:** Awareness about different courses to pursue the career they have chosen.
- 4. Expenditure requirements:** The applications & college fees etc. to meet the required expenditure of the courses.
- 5. Time-investment:** Number of years required for education before getting into the workforce.

Graph 1.1: This graph represents the awareness level of all respondents as we move from the basic to the advanced level.

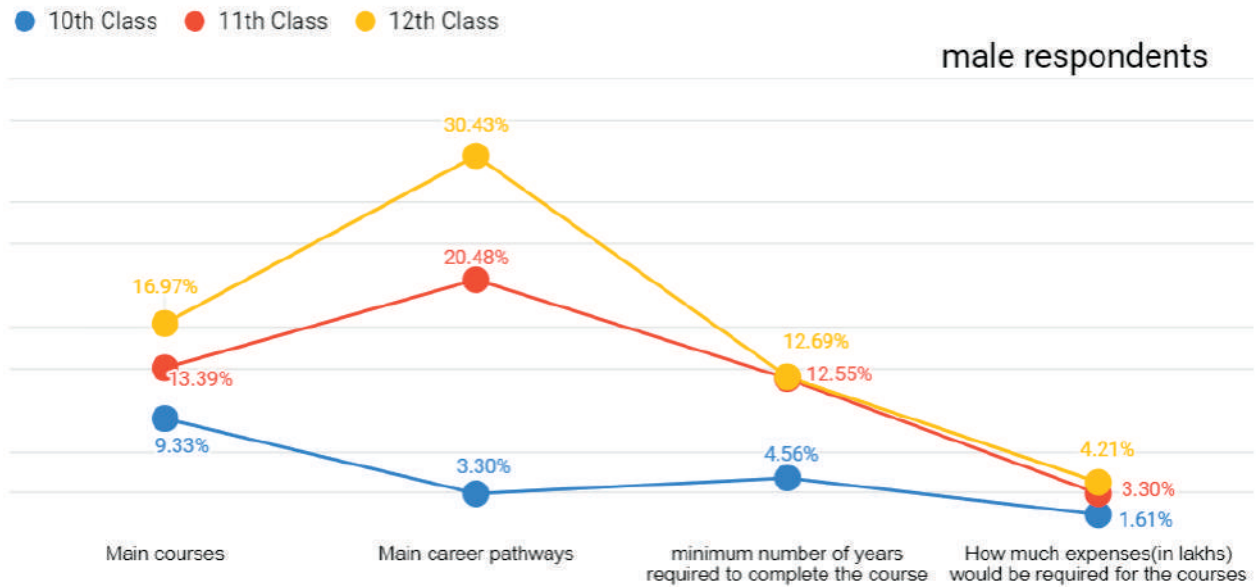


Graph 1.2: This graph represents the awareness level of the female respondents as we move from basic to advanced level.



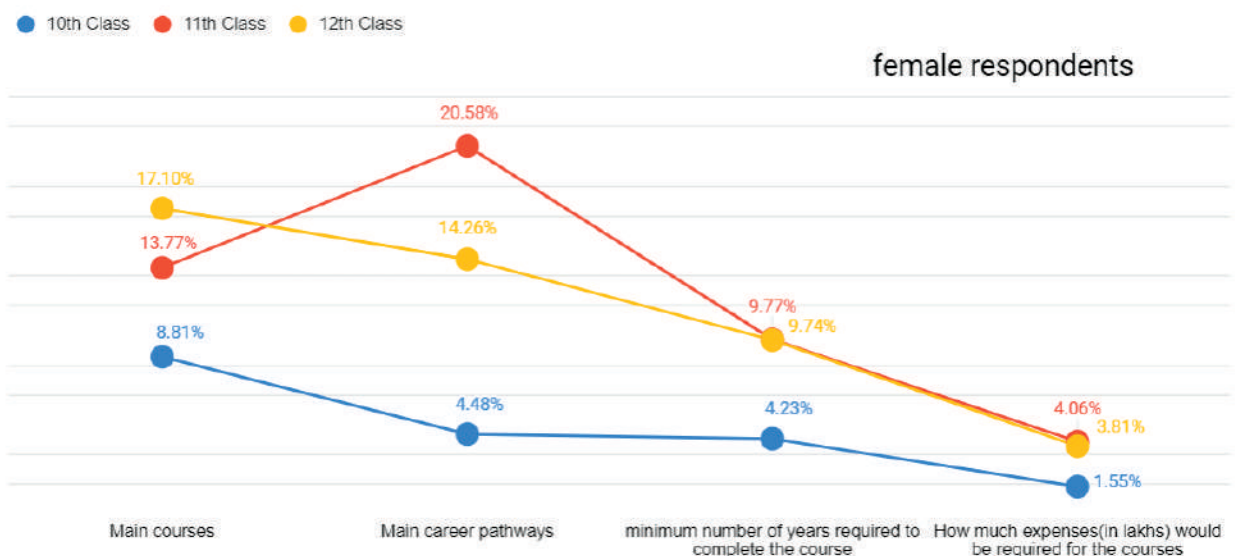
The awareness level about a specific career of their choice goes on decreasing from a basic to an advanced level (choosing a career → knowledge about expenditure).

Graph 1.3: This graph represents the grade-wise awareness level of the male respondents as we move from basic to advanced level.



The career awareness level goes down as we go from basic to advanced level(x-axis) irrespective of the grade they are in. Only 4.2% of male students from grade 12th are able to answer advanced questions related to the career they are interested in.*****

Graph 1.4: This graph represents the grade-wise awareness level of the female respondents as we move from basic to advanced level.



This drop in awareness can be seen irrespective of grade, gender, school type, or state.

50% of the students are unable to identify the right course to pursue their chosen career and this goes down to 29% to 10% when it comes to career pathways, years, and expenditure.

This drop in the awareness level could be a result of multiple factors such as lack of access to information, absence of any professional support, no support system in the entire school system, etc. but the need of making a comprehensive career plan with a practical approach does exist in our education system and systematic change could be the possible solution going forward.



Backup Plan

Do you have a backup plan?

65%

of respondents do not have any backup plan as per the responses in the survey. Out of these students:

- 67.1% male respondents do not have any backup career plan
- 59.3% female respondents do not have any backup career plan.

Backup Career choice by male respondent

Government/Defense Services(12.8%)
Engineering(11.6%)
Business Management (10.4%)

Backup Career choice by female respondent

Education/Teaching(13.3%)
Art & Design(10.7%)
Medical Science/Allied Para Medical (11.4%)

There are different perspectives on having a backup career plan. One perspective is that it dilutes the dedication and hard work of the students and another one is it is good to have a backup career as it provides support or security in the future. As per our survey, most of the students approx 67% male & 60% female respondents do not have any backup plan apart from their main career.

A solid career plan can provide a roadmap to the future with defined timelines. A backup career plan becomes more significant for students from low-income families(1.4L-3.4L per annum) with limited resources specifically when it comes to female students who are mostly second on the priority list in such cases.





The Way Forward

No big change is possible without the collaboration of Samaaj, Sarkaar, and Bazaar. Collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, and non-profit organizations is what iDreamCareer is constantly looking at to amplify the impact of career counselling initiatives, especially for students from underserved communities.

The BCAR also brings out the need of enhancing Career Guidance in Education Institutions capacity building of teachers, parents, and other key stakeholders.

For Female students who are first-generation learners, career counselling can play a significant role by making them aware of diverse opportunities in ensuring their financial freedom, breaking down gender stereotypes, entering non-traditional careers dominated by other genders, representation in workforce/leadership positions, etc.

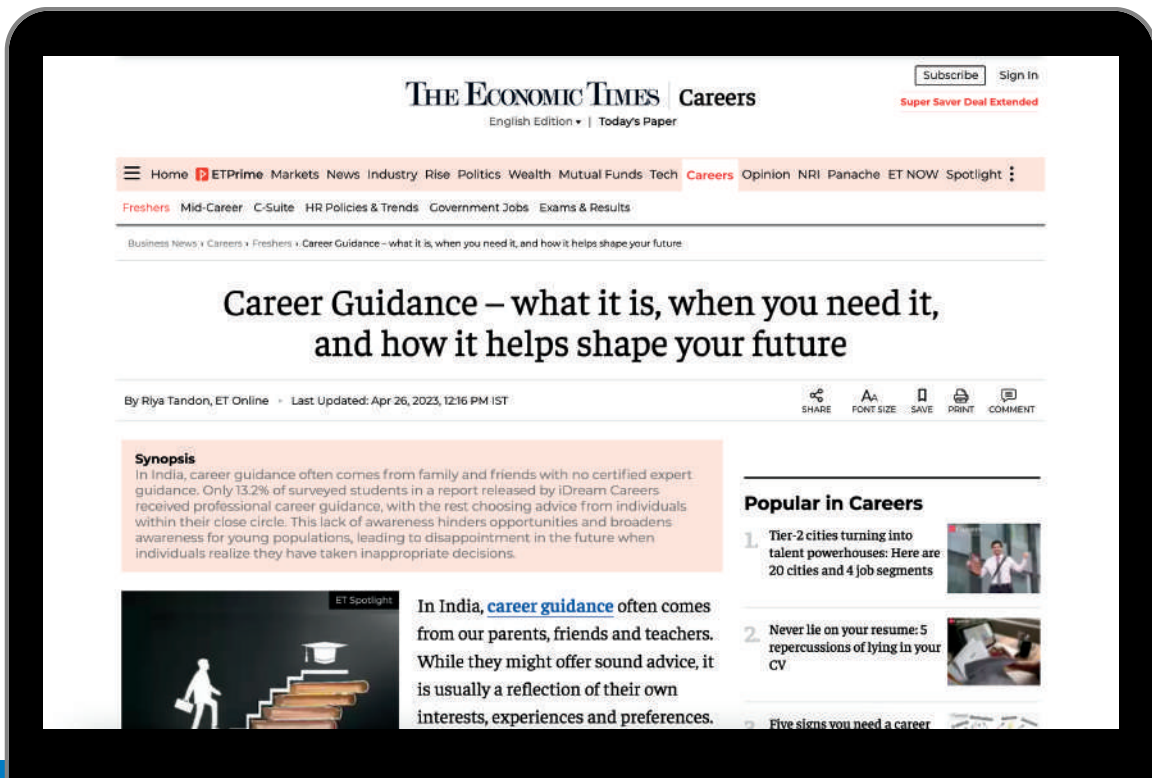
In the years to come, iDreamCareer would continuously strive to deepen the career guidance impact by introducing various technology-driven activities for a student from low-income segments to fulfil their and their family's dreams.

In the last few years, we at iDreamCareer have realized that career aspirations for students from marginalized communities have seen a paradigm shift toward professional careers. The various impact reports that we prepared and published in the last year have brought these factors clearly. However, these reports also helped many key stakeholders around students understand that the limited knowledge of the numerous professional or vocational careers limits the opportunities for students from marginalized communities. The lack of awareness of diverse career opportunities during school also results in 70–80% dropouts after the 10th and 12th classes, resulting in a very low Gross Enrolment Ratio.

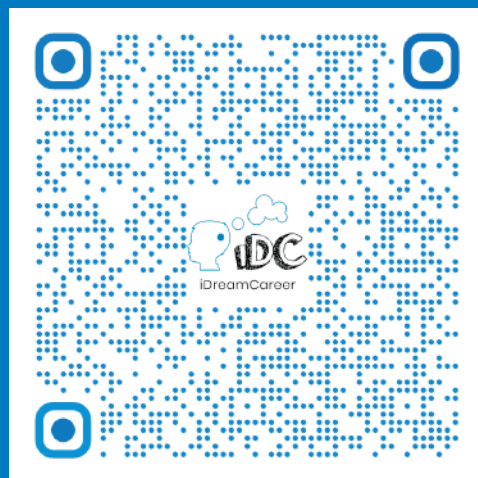
The reports like Bharat Career Aspirations Report (BCAR) can address these problems and organizations working in the interest of creating meaningful opportunities for the youth of Bharat should be able to create impactful and scalable technological solutions.



coverage of the Bharat Career Aspirations Report



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Annexure



Table A1: List of professional and vocational career clusters

Professional career clusters	Vocational career clusters
Agriculture and Food	Agriculture and Food Sciences
Animations, Graphics & Design	Allied & para medical Sciences
Apparel & Accessories	Animations, Graphics & Visual Communication
Banking Financial services & Insurance Operations	Architecture & Planning
Beauty and Wellness	Art & Design
Business operation and Entrepreneurship	Business Management
Construction	Education & Teaching
Defense security and Government services	Engineering & Technology
Early childhood and Primary education training	Finance & Banking
Electronics and Hardware	Fitness & Wellbeing
Engineering and Technical	Government & Defense Services
Gems & Jewelry	Hospitality & Tourism Transport services
Healthcare support services	Humanities, Liberalism and Social Science
Hospitality and Tourism services	IT and CSE
IT and IT enabled services	Journalism
Media and Entertainment	Legal Services
Sales and Marketing Operations	Mass Communication
Sports and Fitness	Medical Science
Textile and Handloom	Performing Arts
	Sales and Marketing
	Science and Mathematics

Table A2: Grade-wise % of students who have chosen professional career clusters

PROFESSIONAL CAREERS	GRADE			
	9th	10th	11h	12th
Allied & para medical Sciences	0.58%	1.48%	0.58%	1.22%
Architecture & Planning	0.13%	0.04%	0.22%	0.09%
Art & Design	1.59%	1.79%	0.49%	1.95%
Business Management	1.42%	1.15%	2.10%	2.15%
Education & Teaching	1.19%	1.11%	1.08%	2.94%
Engineering & Technology	2.43%	1.77%	5.42%	3.01%
Finance & Banking	0.58%	0.60%	2.97%	2.74%
Fitness & Wellbeing	0.80%	0.09%	0.09%	0.31%
Government & Defense Services	3.23%	2.54%	2.54%	4.96%
Humanities, Liberalism and Social Science	0.40%	0.27%	0.64%	0.46%
IT and CSE	0.31%	0.31%	1.53%	1.24%
Journalism	0.07%	0.09%	0.07%	0.27%
Legal Services	0.75%	0.33%	0.40%	0.75%
Mass Communication	0.07%	0.09%	0.07%	0.15%
Medical Science	3.45%	2.01%	5.20%	3.32%
Performing Arts	0.44%	0.20%	0.09%	0.31%
Sales and Marketing	0.07%	0.18%	0.20%	0.40%
Science and Mathematics	0.97%	0.77%	0.60%	0.35%
Agriculture and Food Sciences	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Animations, Graphics & Visual Communication	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hospitality & Tourism Transport services	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Table A3: Grade-wise % of students who have chosen vocational career clusters

VOCATIONAL CAREERS	GRADE			
	9th	10th	11h	12th
Agriculture and Food	0.44%	0.46%	0.15%	0.40%
Animations, Graphics & Design	0.13%	0.15%	0.11%	0.46%
Apparel & Accessories	0.00%	0.04%	0.00%	0.00%
Banking Financial services & Insurance Operations	0.11%	0.13%	0.51%	0.35%
Beauty and Wellness	0.33%	0.44%	0.15%	1.24%
Business operation and Entrepreneurship	0.27%	0.22%	0.09%	0.24%
Construction	0.04%	0.04%	0.00%	0.04%
Defense security and Government services	0.53%	0.38%	0.33%	1.02%
Early childhood and Primary education training	0.07%	0.07%	0.00%	0.11%
Electronics and Hardware	0.11%	0.15%	0.04%	0.07%
Engineering and Technical	0.24%	0.20%	0.35%	0.31%
Gems & Jewelry	0.02%	0.02%	0.00%	0.13%
Healthcare support services	0.13%	0.04%	0.11%	0.11%
Hospitality and Tourism services	0.27%	0.22%	0.33%	0.97%
IT and IT enabled services	0.07%	0.09%	0.38%	0.18%
Media and Entertainment	0.02%	0.18%	0.09%	0.18%
Sales and Marketing Operations	0.04%	0.11%	0.02%	0.07%
Sports and Fitness	0.31%	0.44%	0.22%	0.40%
Textile and Handloom	0.02%	0.02%	0.00%	0.02%

Table A3: % of respondents and their states

States	No. of respondents
Andaman and Nicobar Islands(UT)	0.06%
Andhra Pradesh	0.12%
Assam	0.14%
Bihar	0.72%
Chandigarh(UT)	0.22%
Chhattisgarh	0.10%
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu(UT)	0.04%
Delhi(UT)	8.71%
Goa	0.02%
Gujarat	11.37%
Haryana	8.43%
Himachal Pradesh	0.08%
Jharkhand	2.03%
Karnataka	1.19%
Kerala	0.04%
Ladakh(UT)	0.02%
Madhya Pradesh	0.36%
Maharashtra	16.07%
Manipur	0.02%
Nagaland	0.04%
NC	0.76%
Odisha	0.02%
Punjab	0.18%
Rajasthan	3.94%
Sikkim	0.84%
Tamil Nadu	1.11%
Telangana	3.18%
Uttar Pradesh	23.78%
Uttarakhand	7.56%
West Bengal	8.87%

Table A4: % of respondents from different school types

School type	No. of respondents
Government school	53.42%
Gov-aided	4.48%
Private school	42.11%

Table A5: % of respondents and their household income: self-reported

Annual household income	No. of respondents
Did not share their household income	39.28%
Less than or equal to 1.4 lac/Year	44.08%
More than 1.4 lac but less than or equal to 2.4 lac/Year	8.28%
More than 2.4 lac but less than or equal to 3.4 lac/Year	3.15%
More than 3.4 lac/Year	4.40%
Unaware about annual household income	0.81%

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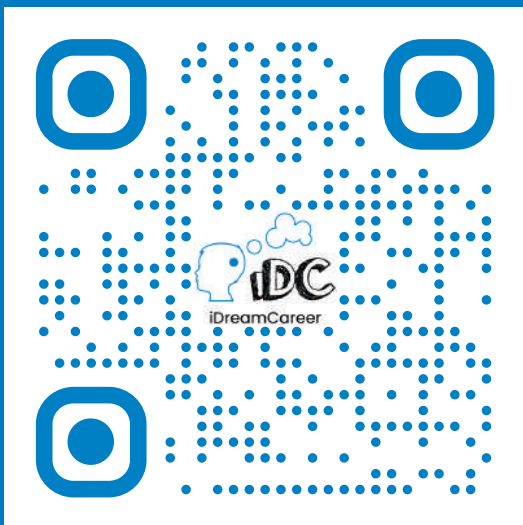
Sqn Ldr N Praveen

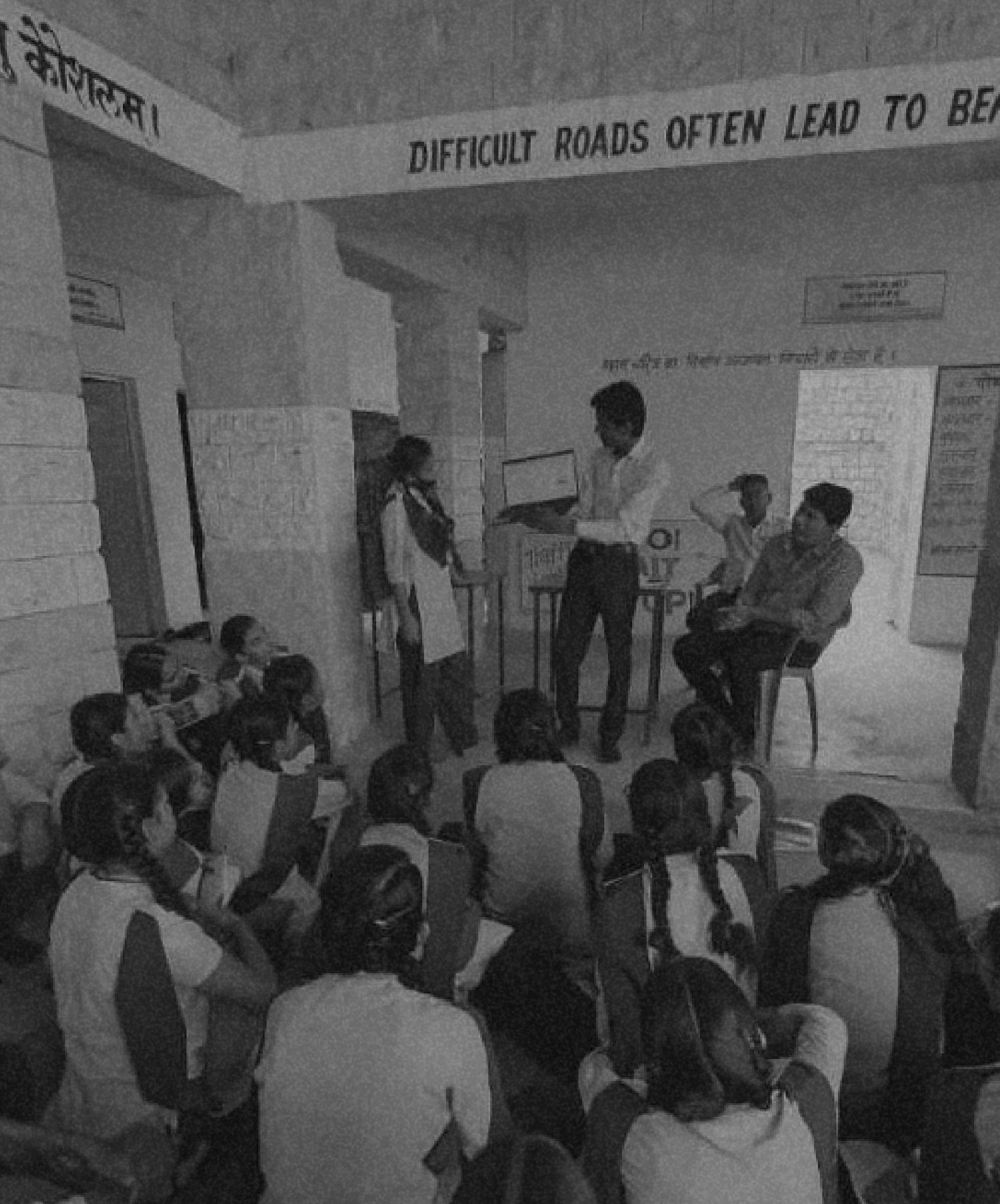
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