

# Evaluation Report: Process evaluation of Kabaddi for Empowerment through Sports in West Bengal



**Authors:**

**Rahul Ranjan Sinha &  
Susmita Guha**

**Submitted to:**

**Terre des hommes  
Foundation**

## Contents

1. Introduction .....	11
1.1. About the Project.....	12
1.2. About the Evaluation.....	13
2. Approach and Methodology.....	14
2.1. Study Location and Participants .....	14
2.2. Methods of Data Collection.....	15
2.3. Tools for Data Collection .....	15
2.4. Sampling Plan and Size .....	16
2.5. Ethical Compliance .....	16
3. Evaluation Findings.....	17
3.1. Respondent Profile.....	19
3.2. Migration: Status and Belief.....	20
3.3. Climate Change.....	25
3.4. Psychosocial Resilience.....	30
3.5. Participation in Sports.....	34
3.6. Life Skills.....	39
3.7. Gender Issues and Induced Changes .....	42
4.1. Programmatic Impact and Sustainability .....	46
4.1.1. Impact and Sustainability of Kabaddi for Empowerment .....	46
4.1.2. Impact at the individual level .....	48
4.1.3. Impact at the community level.....	52
Case Study: Redefining Life's Game with Kabaddi: Her Journey .....	54
Case Study: Empowering Through Sports: Tanima's Journey .....	56
5. Recommendation .....	58
Annexure I – Key Indicators .....	63
Annexure II – Research Instruments.....	64
Annexure III – Terms of Reference.....	84

Figure 1: Impact of Climate Change on Children and Youth.....	11
Figure 2: Theory of Change for K4P Programming (Source: Kabaddi for Empowerment Toolkit -Tdh).....	12
Figure 3: Objectives of Evaluation .....	13
Figure 4: Guiding Principles of the Process Evaluation .....	14
Figure 5: Socioeconomic Profile - Respondents from South 24 Parganas .....	19
Figure 6: Children Profile .....	19
Figure 7: Migration Status and Beliefs .....	20
Figure 8: Migration Details .....	22
Figure 9: Climate Change and its Effect .....	26
Figure 10: Nexus of Climate Change and Migration.....	28
Figure 11:Disaster Preparedness.....	29
Figure 12: Psychosocial Resilience .....	33
Figure 13: Sports Participation.....	35
Figure 14: Emerging Benefits of Sports for Empowerment .....	38
Figure 15:UNICEF's Life Skills Framework.....	39

## Acknowledgement

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organizations whose contributions and support have been invaluable in completing this evaluation report.

The outcome of any development initiative has to be seen through the eyes of the person who is the targeted beneficiary of the initiative. Ensuring that we heard firsthand from the project participants was a critical need. First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the project beneficiaries, stakeholders, and community members who generously shared their time, experiences, and insights, which formed the cornerstone of this evaluation.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the implementing organisations for their unwavering commitment to empowering marginalised communities and facilitating transformative change. We would like to acknowledge the project staff and volunteers whose tireless efforts and dedication have driven the project's operations and outcomes. Your passion, resilience, and commitment to social justice have made a profound difference in the lives of countless individuals and communities.

Our appreciation also goes to the community leaders, government officials, and other stakeholders who have supported and collaborated with the project, contributing to its sustainability and long-term impact.

We would like to acknowledge the financial support provided by the Terres des Hommes Foundation, which enabled the execution of this evaluation. Their commitment to promoting accountability, transparency, and learning in development programming is commendable. Your investment in social empowerment and community development continues to yield meaningful results and lasting change.

Finally, we acknowledge the invaluable guidance, support, and expertise provided by all those who have contributed to the design, implementation, and evaluation of the Kabaddi for Empowerment project. Your collective efforts have been instrumental in advancing our shared goal of empowering marginalized communities and fostering social justice.

Thank you to everyone involved for your dedication, collaboration, and commitment to creating a more equitable and inclusive society.

Sincerely,

*Rahul Ranjan Sinha*

*Susmita Guha*

## List of Acronyms

ANM – Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife  
BPL - Below Poverty Line  
CBO – Community Based Organization  
EWS – Early Warning System  
FGDs - Focus Group Discussions  
HHs – Households  
ID – Identification  
IMD - India Meteorological Department  
INR - Indian Rupees  
ISWS – Indraprastha Social Welfare Society  
Kanyasree Prakalpa – A Government Scheme  
KIIs - Key Informant Interviews  
LFA - Logical Framework Approach  
MHPSS – Mental Health and Psychosocial Support  
ORF - Olympic Refugee Foundation  
PMAY – Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna  
POCSO Act - Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act  
Prajaak - Praajak Development Society  
S4E – Sports for Empowerment  
SC - Scheduled Castes  
ST - Scheduled Tribes  
Tdh - Terres Des Hommes  
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  
VLCPC – Village Level Child Protection Committee  
WASH - Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

## Executive Summary

Sundarbans have garnered recent attention due to the degrading biodiversity triggered by climate change. In the recent past, Sidr (2007), Aila (2009), Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Fani (2019), Bulbul (2019), Amphan (2020), and Yaas (2021) have struck the Sundarbans with cycles of immense destruction. The frequency of these events has led to the Sundarbans being dubbed the *cyclone capital of India*, as noted in an IMD report. Extreme weather events such as cyclones and storms, salinization of lands, coastal erosion, and habitat degradation are some of the pressing issues that Sundarbans face today. As a result, it faces the brunt of climate-induced migration, and the impact on Children and Youth is immense. Children and youth today face risks, including disrupted education, child protection concerns like child labor and marriage, health issues, poverty, and deprivation. Moreover, they are at a greater risk of significant psychosocial challenges, leading to heightened stress, anxiety, and trauma.

In 2018-19, Terres des hommes (Tdh), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF) collaborated to develop the Sports for Protection Toolkit. This toolkit was specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by children and youth in climate-distressed regions. In 2019, Tdh adapted the toolkit to suit the Indian context, resulting in the Kabaddi for Empowerment methodology and piloted this in Malda, Siliguri, and Berhampur districts of West Bengal, with a focus on empowering adolescents and young people affected by unsafe migration to achieve protection outcomes like social cohesion and psycho-social wellbeing. In its next phase, Tdh is targeting 600 girls and 300 boys aged 12-18 in the Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of Sundarbans, aiming to empower them to claim their rights and oppose sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, adopting a socio-ecological lens, the project engages with families and formal/informal duty bearers to create an enabling environment so that young people threatened or affected by migration can realize their rights and be free from discrimination, exploitation, and gender-based violence, create an enabling environment.

To enhance its understanding of child protection challenges in the Sundarbans, Tdh commissioned a comprehensive process evaluation, employing a multi-stakeholder approach. A mixed-method research design was used to develop a rigorous and robust evaluation framework and included desk reviews, Household Surveys with parents and children, Focus Group Discussions with Parents, Children, and Youth leaders, and Key Informant Interviews with government or community stakeholders and Youth leaders. A total of 292 households were surveyed, 11 FGDs were conducted, and 18 KIIs were conducted. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to, ensuring the protection of participants' data and privacy.

The study area can be broadly classified into two groups, with varying maturity of interventions. In Sundarbans, the study was conducted with children and families across two blocks—Patharpratima and Gosaba—to understand the existing needs, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies for climate change, migration, and gender-based discrimination. Additionally, the study reached out to the youth leaders in Malda, Berhampur, and Siliguri (the latter two remotely) to understand the project outcomes of Kabaddi for Protection, its sustainability, and its impact.

The results have been captured in two chapters: Chapter 1 covers the project findings in Patharpratima and Gosaba, while Chapter 2 covers the research findings across Malda, Bahrapur, and Siliguri.

### Chapter 1 - Patharpratima and Gosaba

The demographic data collected reveal that the study area, South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, exhibits a diverse socio-economic landscape. About 46% of the households had at least one migrant member, and it was also represented as the primary source of household income, wherein more than 40% of the households were dependent on non-farm wage labor. A notable presence of pisciculture (14%) and agriculture (24%) was also observed. Economic status exhibited a notable disparity, with 60% of households classified as below the poverty line (BPL). Another indicator of economic deprivation was the high prevalence (42%) of landlessness. Lower educational attainments of the respondents were also stark, with only 22% of respondents completing their secondary education. Lower educational attainments of the respondents were also stark, with only 22% of respondents completing their secondary education

Migration has been a survival strategy for residents of the Sundarbans for a long time, and over the years, it has seen a rise. Study results indicated that 88% of the respondents believed migration has increased in the past ten years. More than half of them (61%) considered the present incidences of migration to be high in their communities. Major destination corridors were Kerala, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore. This evaluation's qualitative analyses (FGDs and KIIs) have validated migration as an increasing trend as a long-term adaptation and short-term coping strategy to the environmental crisis.

Most households (97%) believed that migration brought benefits to their households and communities. For households, it improved their economic status, access to quality education and healthcare, status in the community, and bargaining power. Among the cited reasons, the most prominent concerns were the disruption of family dynamics and the potential for migration to lead to substance abuse. With the emergence of the digital world and access to technologies like smartphones and various social network applications, communities are better connected, and the taboos related to migration have lessened but has also resulted in digital addiction. Despite the perceived benefits of migration, about three-fourths of the respondents expressed a desire to cease migration if given the choice. The separation from family, children, and roots is not aligned with the people's desires. Consequently, if presented with the choice, there is a strong inclination to return home, with a preference for alternative livelihood opportunities within the local region.

The quantitative study revealed that 50% of the surveyed migrants were engaged in unskilled labour, such as domestic and construction work. The remaining 50% migrated to engage in skilled work as masons, carpenters, and drivers. The average time spent at the destination corridor was 8 months. Temporary cyclic migration was found to be the major form of migration where labour migration is facilitated through informal processes by independent contractors, familial connections, and social networks. The quantitative findings corroborated these observations, as 62% of the migration was influenced by middlemen, followed by 25% of sourcing agencies. Generally known as 'thikadar', they contact the workers and share information about wage rates, work sites, travel details etc. The intermediaries or agents predominantly originate from local communities and often possess extensive networks that facilitate the recruitment of human resources across regions, including unskilled or semi-skilled labor

Men migrated compulsorily from most of the migrant households. Only a few (17%) took along their spouse, and even fewer (5%) carried their children. Only women who migrated from households were a rarity. Couples left the islands searching for alternative livelihoods, leaving their children behind in the care and supervision of immediate families or relatives. Additionally, a prevalence of marriage migration among adolescent girls and youth was observed. Migration among youth, especially males, has been growing for purposes of higher education and engagement in economic activities. The discussion with parents and government stakeholders highlighted Cyclone Aila in 2009 as a landmark incident that led to a sudden upsurge of out-migration from the Sundarbans region. In more than three-fourths of cases, spouses, parents, or in-laws are consulted, and their opinions are valued, but children rarely have a voice in such decision-making. The survey found that only 7% of households involve children in migration decision-making. Study results indicate that more than 64% of the respondents believed that people face challenges during migration. During the qualitative inquiries, many reported instances of agony and trauma the migrant labourers face during their transit and stay at their destination.

The quantitative survey results reveal that only a small proportion (2%) of migrants were children or adolescents and engaged in work. However, the qualitative inquiries also revealed some cases of changing the age of government IDs to get work at the destination corridors. Push for getting a job from families was also noted in the case of boys for migration. The burden of debt on families or the lure of money tricked families into pushing their boys to migrate.

Climate change is upon us, and the residents of the Sundarbans have to endure its effects more than others in India. The evaluation enquired about the perception and impact of climate change in the two blocks of South 24 Parganas. Results from the quantitative study revealed that 99% of the respondents reported

experiencing climate change in the past ten years. The qualitative research revealed that climate change has far-reaching effects on agricultural productivity and food security. Three out of four households have faced damage due to the natural calamity in the past 10 years. Given the economic profile of the sample households, one can imagine the impact of such damage on their life. Qualitative findings highlight that households often incur debt primarily for housing repair or construction, compelling them to migrate. The impact of climate change on the livelihoods of communities can be understood from the fact that 61% of the respondents have confirmed the intrusion of salinity in freshwater sources and groundwater. Therefore, farmers can produce only one crop during the rainy season. About 45% of the respondents feel that crop production has decreased, and 22% feel that the cropping pattern has changed. A reduction in fish production was reported at 55%. More than 41% of the respondents mentioned that mangroves are declining. The receding of the mangroves coupled with the concurrent storms have also resulted in bank/soil erosion (reported by 36% of the respondents). The loss of biodiversity is visible, affecting various flora and fauna and potentially resulting in a decrease in honey production (as reported by 19% of the respondents).

The influence of climate change on migration patterns was evident, with an overwhelming 87% of respondents attributing increased migration to environmental factors. This trend is also pronounced among children and adolescents, with 60% of respondents indicating a surge in their migration rates. However, the quantitative survey found that only a small proportion (2%) of migrants were children or adolescents and engaged in work. However, when these data points are juxtaposed, the study reports an increasing migration trend among adolescents and youth, and climate change has a triggering role in it.

Education systems grappled with the fallout of climate-related events, as evidenced by high rates of irregular school attendance (70%) and dropout rates (27%). Schools remain shut, as these are turned into temporary shelters, and road connectivity is affected, preventing children from accessing school. While children remain one of the most vulnerable and affected groups, there was limited scope for children to talk about disaster-related risks (physical, social, and mental), and their collective voice was yet to be heard and incorporated into any action plans. Interaction with key stakeholders revealed that child protection mechanisms at the local level, especially for children affected by natural calamities, are neither child-friendly nor efficient. Though Village Level Child Protection Committees (LCPC) are formed, they are not functional.

The study gathered information on community preparedness against disasters brought on by cyclones in recent years. All reported that emergency preparedness was lacking considerably before Aila's widespread destruction in 2009 hit the region. The early warning systems (EWS) and timely dissemination of information have recently improved in the region. All the community residents, including children, know the early warnings and the protocols to follow. However, only 6% of the respondents reported participating in community disaster drills. The local government office played a crucial role in information dissemination. The survey shows that 71% of the emergency alerts are channeled through the local government department. About 94% of the respondents have reported following news channels for emergency alerts. About 67% of the surveyed households reported having access to a designated evacuation place during cyclones and floods. About 42% of the households mentioned taking essentials and belongings to the Shelter when taking refuge during floods and cyclones. Loss of animal lives leaves children and women in deep emotional trauma and sadness.

Existing literature suggests that the impacts of climate change on children are not always straightforward and easily predictable. These impacts vary and depend on context and are facilitated by a host of socio-cultural, economic, ecological, and/or political factors. Children and adolescents are the worst affected. The disruptions in family life induced by migration, uncertainty of the future, loss of loved ones, homes, and livelihoods, exposure to vulnerability and exploitation, and constant battle with the fury of nature contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. The interaction with stakeholders in Gosaba and Patharpratima has highlighted the prevalence of various forms of negligence, exploitation, and abuse among children and adolescents. Child marriage is prevalent; Children also go missing. The study results indicate a modest availability of support systems for children, and children reported access to various forms



of support when faced with challenges. Across the board, approximately 64% of children reported having a support system in place if they felt threatened or unsafe, indicating a foundational level of safety nets within their communities. A greater proportion of girls reported understanding their rights, though they were less likely to know anyone outside their family to approach in an emergency. In the context of the S4E project, it asserts programmatic relevance where the collectivization and social capital gains are expected to enhance their knowledge and support-seeking behaviour outside the households. Despite the presence of support systems, children continue to grapple with various adverse experiences. Boys were more likely to be at the receiving end. Our analysis underscores the complex interplay between support systems and adverse experiences in shaping children's psychosocial resilience. While strides have been made in providing support services and raising awareness of children's rights, continued efforts are needed to address the underlying factors contributing to adverse experiences and to create environments that promote positive development and well-being for all children.

The study looked into the mindset and practice of sports in the community. The project, with its focus on adolescent girls, intends to learn about the efficacy of Kabaddi as an entry point to building resilience among children in the disaster-affected region. The study looked into the mindset and practice of sports in the community. The project, with its focus on adolescent girls, intends to learn about the efficacy of Kabaddi as an entry point to building resilience among children in the disaster-affected region. A statistically significant difference in frequencies and types of sports played by girls and boys was observed. Girls played less, were less involved in physical and high-contact sports, and were less likely to play on open grounds. Girls face greater barriers in the form of social and gender norms. The quantitative survey also explored parents' perceptions of sports, especially by applying a gender lens. Even though 90% of the parents reported that girls should play sports but the duality of the response was more evident when probed. Only 25% of the parents could identify that not allowing girls to play was a harmful gender practice, and only two-thirds of them encouraged boys to take part in household chores. The qualitative findings unpack such deep-seated gender norms and barriers to participation in sports. Educational priorities, socio-cultural norms, parental concerns such as an injury during the games, societal judgment, financial constraints, and limited access to space were some of the key barriers to participation in sports, and girls bore a greater share of these barriers.

The study applied UNICEF's Life Skill Measurement Tool (LSMT) among children and adolescents in South 24 Parganas, providing valuable insights into their psychosocial development. The total LSMT scores ranged from 75 to 119, with a mean score of 104 across all participants. This indicates a relatively high level of life skill acquisition among the surveyed children and adolescents. The scores were consistent across different locations, genders, and age groups, suggesting a uniform distribution of life skills proficiency within the sample population. The average scores for critical thinking and decision-making were 11.3 and 12.2, respectively, out of a maximum of 16. These scores indicate a moderate level of proficiency in these areas among the participants. Notably, there were minimal variations in scores across different locations, genders, and age groups. Creativity yielded an average score of 11.3 out of 16, suggesting that children and adolescents possessed adequate life skills to navigate through situations and adapt to diverse situations. In the areas of negotiation and empathy, children scored 11.4 and 12.6, respectively; however, scores in communication were low (9). This further highlighted the need to work on the communication skills of the children in the target geography. Age and gender were influencing factors for the Negotiation score. While overall scores were consistent across genders and age groups, subtle variations were observed. Girls exhibited slightly higher scores in critical thinking, decision-making, and empathy, indicating a nuanced gender difference in certain life skills. Similarly, older participants demonstrated slightly higher scores in creativity and negotiation, suggesting a potential developmental progression in these skills with age.

Children, especially girls, in Sundarbans face high school dropout rates due to prohibitive gender roles. Girls primarily engage in household chores, while boys contribute to family income. Women bear disproportionate household burdens, impacting their well-being. Gender norms hinder discussions on menstruation, leading to girls' discomfort and confusion. Discrimination against girls is evident in family preferences, limited sports participation, and high rates of gender-based violence and trafficking. Women

dominate agriculture but lack land rights and face climate-related challenges. Exclusive interventions for girls risk reinforcing gender divides, highlighting the need for inclusive programs involving boys and LGBTQ+ communities to address systemic barriers.

## Chapter 2 - Youth Leaders in Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri

The Kabaddi for Empowerment project in West Bengal has significantly positively impacted the cognitive, psycho-social, and gender empowerment aspects among children and youth in the target communities. **Over the course of the project, the intervention has been seen to challenge some prohibitive social norms and bring about gender equality in the lives of adolescents in the target communities. Group formation was deemed effective as the project team engaged with community leaders and members, leveraging existing social capital. Group dynamics were vibrant, with members demonstrating a strong sense of association and solidarity.** The project has successfully integrated Kabaddi (sports) as an enabler towards community participation in addressing issues related to gender-based violence and prohibitive social norms. However, with the youth leaders emerging as the flag bearers of the cause, they are seen to be faced with hindrances in seamlessly taking the work forward in their communities. Youth leaders face challenges in expanding program reach without Praajak's support. Introducing Kabaddi to new areas encounters social barriers, requiring significant time, resources, and community mobilization. Further training and strategic support for youth leaders are essential for program sustainability, possibly through collaboration with other community-based organizations.

At the individual level, the project has significantly boosted awareness, confidence, and leadership skills among youth leaders. They engage in community dialogue, cite legal references, and address issues like child marriage, migration, and alcoholism. The project focused heavily on value-based learning through sports and guided sessions. However, the impact of these issue-based and value-based sessions was not quite captured through structured pre-and post-training assessments, leaving most of the impact inferences anecdotal and open to unsubstantiated interpretations of change in skill, competence, knowledge, and attitude. The program can strengthen this aspect in the future. Despite the lack of structured assessments, the program empowers youth to advocate for change. However, challenges persist in retaining knowledge and balancing leadership roles with education. Youth leaders actively challenge gender norms and collaborate with stakeholders to address local issues. The project's phased withdrawal necessitates continued mentorship and clarity in roles. It should also include boys in initiatives like Kabaddi to promote positive masculinities and holistic community development.

At the community level, the project has lowered the barriers to girls' participation in sports. Girls participating in high-contact sports like Kabaddi are considered inappropriate, and Girls who play such sports may be perceived as non-feminine. **As a collective, the girls have been able to reject stereotypes of feminine identity, embracing a new definition of what it means to be a woman with the attributes of being a sportswoman.** Gender roles also tend to become more stringent for girls who enter adolescence. The project's deliberate focus on adolescent girls is apt and relevant in the context of addressing social norms and gender barriers. However, the lack of safe and appropriate sports facilities and playing grounds adds to girls' hindrances in sports participation. The locally available playgrounds are essentially occupied by boys, leaving no space for girls to play.

In Behrampur, the project successfully included members of the LGBTQI+ community in the program. They actively participate in the group sessions and bring up unique and diverse perspectives of the challenges, barriers, discrimination, and exclusion faced by this marginalised group. At the local level, the project has collaborated mainly with the local government, village-level health facilitators, and the child helpline services. A strategic focus on integrating with government schemes for children, adolescents, and migrants can enhance the project's sustainability. The legacy of the project, in the form of youth leadership and children's collectives, can be sustained towards community upliftment through continued convergence with local governance and influencing its mechanisms.

## Recommendations

The following are the key recommendations emerging from this study:

### **Program Design**

- Incrementally focus on enhancing children's communication skills to bridge identified gaps.
- Include an online safety module for children and adolescents to address prevalent issues like cyberbullying and online harassment.
- Establish convergence with schools through teacher training and integration of Kabaddi for Empowerment into Physical Education classes.
- Strengthen systems by intensifying efforts to facilitate intra-household dialogue and empower children and youth to demand protection and entitlements.

### **Elevate Gender Transformative Programming**

- Conduct structured Gender Intra-Household Dialogues to elevate the voices of girls and women.
- Develop a Male Engagement Strategy to redistribute gender roles within households.
- Include girls in stakeholder dialogues and incorporate women's groups within interventions.
- Consider a mixed group approach to Kabaddi to promote positive masculinity and challenge gender norms effectively.

### **Program Communication and Knowledge Management**

- Utilize innovative and interactive communication platforms to share stories of change.
- Enhance focus on knowledge management and learning opportunities through documentation efforts.

### **Program Sustainability**

- Transfer ownership to children and youth in the communities by conducting refresher training, facilitating virtual mentoring sessions, and encouraging leadership roles.
- Leverage Technology to Create virtual peer support groups, seek counselling services and access government services and benefits
- Diversify program focus on economic inclusion and livelihoods, leveraging market research and technology to effectively empower youth and children.

# 1. Introduction

Sundarbans, the land of the mystical Royal Bengal Tiger, where lush mangrove forests whisper ancient tales of majesty and unparalleled biodiversity, has recently been in the news for its degrading biodiversity triggered by climate change. In the recent past, Sidr (2007), Aila (2009), Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Fani (2019), Bulbul (2019), Amphan (2020), and Yaas (2021) have struck the Sundarbans with cycles of immense destruction. The frequency of these events has led to the Sundarbans being dubbed the *cyclone capital of India*, as noted in an IMD report<sup>1</sup>. Extreme weather events such as cyclones and storms, salinization of lands, coastal erosion, and habitat degradation are some of the pressing issues that Sundarbans face today. As a result, climate-induced migration has been on the rise.

The incidences of migration in Sundarbans can be traced back to 1968, but cyclone Aila can be seen as a tipping point for exacerbating such a migratory trend<sup>2</sup>. As the primary occupations in the region, agriculture and aquaculture, suffered due to soil salinisation, male household members migrated out in search of work. Families were left behind, relying on remittances. Other than cities within West Bengal like Kolkata and Howrah, leading destination corridors for migration from the Sundarbans outside the state include Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, and Gujarat, among others. Only a small proportion of the migration from the Sundarbans area is on a permanent basis; the majority of the migration is seasonal and temporary. According to the Rural Household Survey, over 25% of the principal earners of individual families migrated temporarily in search of work<sup>3</sup>. Migrants have low social and economic security at destination sites, and more often than not, they stand exploited but have no recourse to complain<sup>4</sup>.

Various research studies have captured the impact of climate-induced migration on children and youth, which has been immense. The economic impacts of climate-induced migration disproportionately affect children and youth, placing them at risk of poverty and deprivation. A study jointly conducted by Tdh and SaciWaters found that the “Increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related extreme events are likely

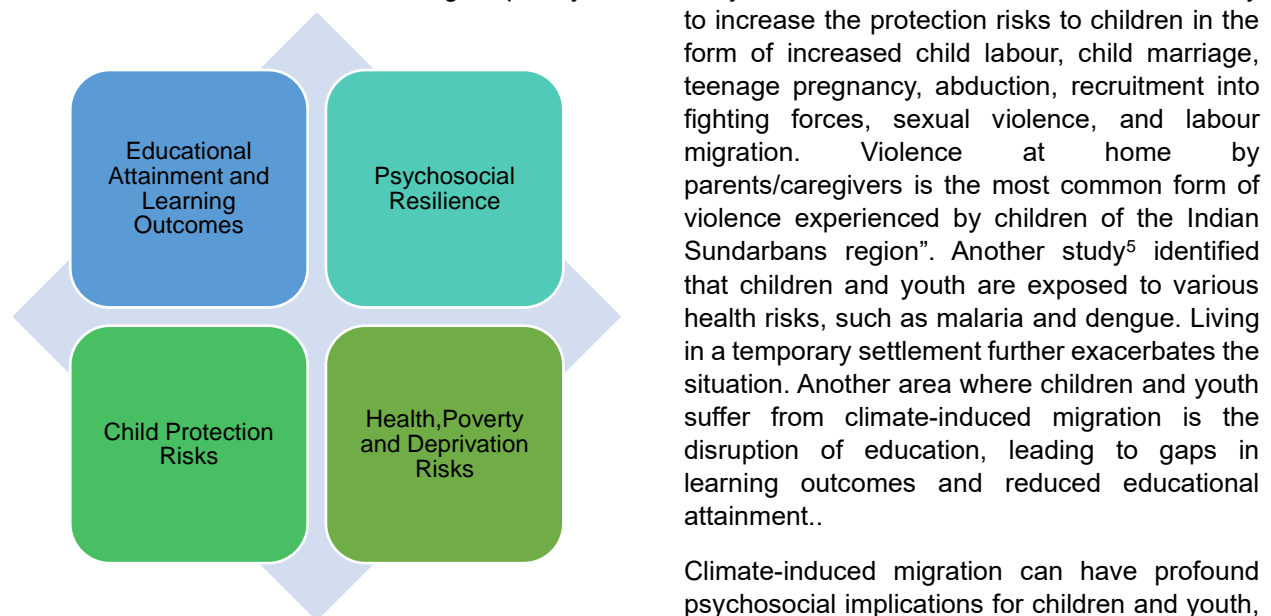


Figure 1: Impact of Climate Change on Children and Youth

to increase the protection risks to children in the form of increased child labour, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, abduction, recruitment into fighting forces, sexual violence, and labour migration. Violence at home by parents/caregivers is the most common form of violence experienced by children of the Indian Sundarbans region”. Another study<sup>5</sup> identified that children and youth are exposed to various health risks, such as malaria and dengue. Living in a temporary settlement further exacerbates the situation. Another area where children and youth suffer from climate-induced migration is the disruption of education, leading to gaps in learning outcomes and reduced educational attainment..

Climate-induced migration can have profound psychosocial implications for children and youth, including increased stress, anxiety, and trauma.

Results from a global survey<sup>6</sup>, including India, published in [The Lancet](#), suggest that people are worried about climate change (59% were very or

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/natural-disasters/sundarbans-is-cyclone-capital-of-india-imd-report-81244>

<sup>2</sup> Destinations of Male Outmigration and their Drivers in Indian Sundarbans (Shatabdi Saha, Rupak Goswami)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/india-migration-from-climate-change-getting-worse/a-65369043>

<sup>4</sup> [https://cansouthasia.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Migration\\_India\\_20\\_02\\_2021.pdf](https://cansouthasia.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Migration_India_20_02_2021.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Health hazards and mitigation measures of migrant construction workers (S Agarwal and J Mahanta)

<sup>6</sup> Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey

extremely worried, and 84% were at least moderately worried). More than 50% reported each of the following emotions: sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty. More than 45% of respondents said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning, and many reported many negative thoughts about climate change.

### 1.1. About the Project

In 2018-19, Terres des hommes (Tdh), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Olympic Refuge Foundation (ORF) developed the Sports for Protection Toolkit. In 2019, Tdh adapted the toolkit to Indian contexts, developing the Kabaddi for Empowerment methodology. The aim was to utilise Kabaddi to build resilience and self and collective efficacy. From 2019-22, Praajak and Tdh piloted this methodology in Malda, Siliguri, and Berhampur districts of West Bengal, with a focus on empowering adolescents and young people affected by unsafe migration to achieve protection outcomes like social cohesion and psycho-social wellbeing. As a result of this, a total of 160 youth leaders are currently operating in these three districts. The project included 24 structured coaching sessions to promote safe sports,

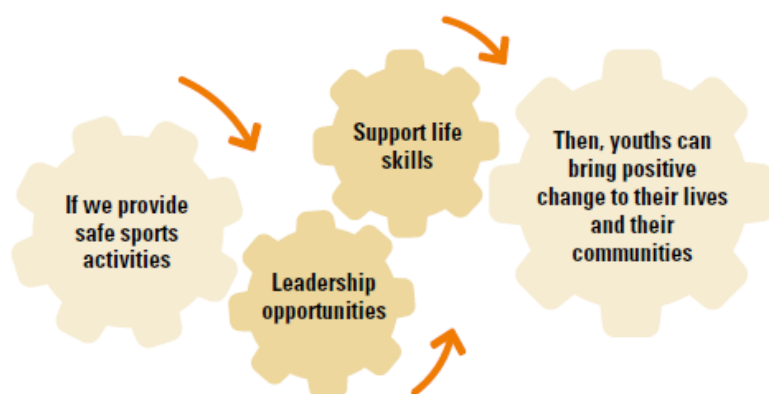


Figure 2: Theory of Change for K4P Programming (Source: Kabaddi for Empowerment Toolkit -Tdh)

strengthen life skills, and provide leadership opportunities to the children. The intended protection outcomes were Social Inclusion- “Including everyone”; Social Cohesion - “Living together”; Emotional well-being - “Feeling safe, connected, respected, worthy and hopeful.”

Building on these experiences, the project expanded its scope to address child protection crises in climate-distressed regions like the Sundarbans. A joint study by Tdh and SaciWaters highlighted the nexus

between climate change impacts and child protection issues, particularly labour migration, which exposes children to various forms of abuse and exploitation. The project aims to apply the Kabaddi for Empowerment methodology to build resilience among children and youth, recognising them as active change agents in climate adaptation efforts.

In the current phase, Tdh is targeting 600 girls and 300 boys aged 12-18 in the Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of Sundarbans, aiming to empower them to claim their rights and oppose sexual and gender-based violence. Additionally, adopting a socio-ecological lens, the project engages with families and formal/informal duty bearers to create an enabling environment so that young people threatened or affected by migration can realise their rights and be free from discrimination, exploitation, and gender-based violence create an enabling environment. It also seeks to leverage the leadership of 160 young leaders trained in previous phases to drive positive change within their communities in the three districts of Malda, Siliguri, and Berhampur.

The role of Youth Leaders (YLS) in the community is of a change agent. In the long run, they are expected to conduct the sessions with the children in their communities, identifying problems and solving the community problems together, acting as role models which eventually allow other girls to alleviate their aspirations and continue education, skill training etc., enhancing their life skills and status in the community.

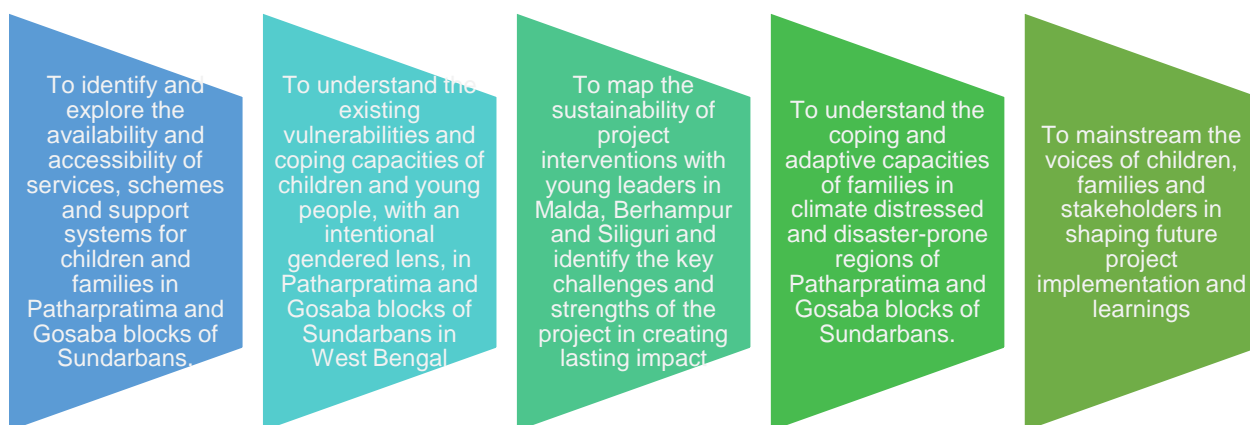
### Project Profile<sup>7</sup>:

<sup>7</sup> Source – Terms of Reference for the Study

Project name	Kabaddi - Youth Empowerment through Sport in West Bengal
Aim	To empower children and young people, particularly girls, at risk of/affected by unsafe migration to participate in sports in a more protective and inclusive community around them, reducing their risk of further unsafe migration.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After three years, children and young people who are at risk or affected by unsafe migration will be empowered to claim their rights and challenge harmful gender-based practices.</li> <li>2. After three years, families will help children and young people at risk of migration or affected by migration to exercise their rights.</li> <li>3. After three years, formal and informal actors are supporting children and young people from migrant families, especially victims of sexual abuse and exploitation</li> </ol>
Location	Patharpratima, Gosaba, Malda, Siliguri, Berhampur
Project Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 in Malda, Siliguri, Berhampur</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 onwards in Patharpratima</li> <li>• Project yet to commence in Gosaba (Proposed inception date: Early 2024)</li> </ul>
Total Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 600 girls and 300 boys aged 12-18 years, 900 family members in Patharpratima and Gosaba, South 24 Parganas</li> <li>• 160 young leaders at Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur</li> </ul>
Implementing Partner	Praajak Development Society

## 1.2. About the Evaluation

Tdh commissioned the process evaluation further to expand its learnings about the Sports for Empowerment model. The purpose of the study was two-pronged: 1) Learning and 2) Informing future program design. The study aimed to enhance a contextualised understanding of the child protection challenges and vulnerabilities in Sundarbans by applying a multi-stakeholder lens. Furthermore, it aimed to develop a deeper understanding of the project outcomes in the Malda, Siliguri, and Berhampur districts. The specific objectives<sup>8</sup> of the assignment were as follows:

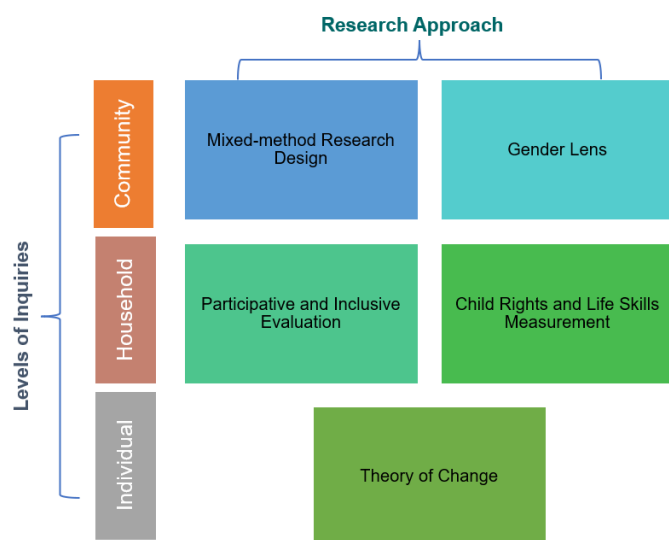


**Figure 3: Objectives of Evaluation**

<sup>8</sup> Source – Terms of Reference for the study

## 2. Approach and Methodology

A consultative and participative approach was adopted by employing a mixed-method research design during the design and implementation of this research study. A mixed-method research design was used to develop a rigorous and robust evaluation framework based on multiple lines of evidence proposed for this program evaluation.



**Figure 4: Guiding Principles of the Process Evaluation**

A gender lens was used to discern the impact of unsafe migration and climate change on girls and women. Furthermore, the study also examined the effect on vulnerable and disadvantaged sections in the region. Given the programmatic focus on vulnerable and marginalised populations, the consultant assessed the impact heterogeneity, especially on the most marginalised and vulnerable populations.

The evaluation kickstarted with a stakeholder mapping exercise that enabled the evaluators to identify key actors and their priorities and responsibilities under the program. Leveraging that, the consultant adopted a consultative, inclusive, and participative approach to ensure that different stakeholders' voices were captured during the evaluation. The adopted approach developed a holistic picture, identifying the intended and unintended outcomes of the

program. The study focused on three levels: 1) Individual, 2) Household, and 3) Community, to assess migration status, effect of climate change and its impact on children and youth.

The evaluation was based on gender and child rights principles (enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child), which India has ratified. The study also adhered to Tdh's ethical principles of Do No Harm, standards of child safeguarding policies, and the Global Code of Conduct. The evaluators and enumerators received guidance on these policies at the outset of the assignment. The evaluation assignment adopted a participatory and inclusive approach to engage directly with children, youth, and their communities in the project geographies. Within this realm, the evaluation considered the principles of inclusion ((i.e., gender, age, ethnicity, religion, etc.), ensured child and youth participation, and emphatically focused on cultural sensitivity. The evaluation cohesively and comprehensively included gender indicators and generated gender-disaggregated data for analysis through a gender lens. The project also probed into learning questions that synthesise gender-related findings, recommendations and lessons learned to inform future decision-making and planning for the project and similar initiatives and contribute to organisational knowledge development.

Overall, the evaluation methodology adopted by the consultant was based on a robust research design to answer key evaluation questions listed in the Terms of Reference, respond to the present status of the indicators in the log frame and draw empirical evidence to answer the research inquiries. Through a participatory and inclusive method, the evaluation effectively captured insights into the requirements, vulnerabilities, and capabilities of children and their surroundings in climate-affected areas of Sundarbans. It adopted a socio-ecological perspective to comprehend the findings and also examined the intervention's effects in previous implementation areas.

### 2.1. Study Location and Participants

The study was deployed across multiple areas, broadly grouped into two fields, with varying maturity of interventions. In Sundarbans, the study was conducted with children and families across two blocks, namely Patharpratima and Gosaba, in the South 24 Parganas district, to understand the existing needs, vulnerabilities, and coping strategies to climate change, migration, gender-based discrimination, etc. Key



informants from the government at the village and block level were also interviewed. Additionally, the study reached out to the youth leaders in Malda, Berhampur, and Siligiri (the latter two remotely) to understand the project outcomes of Kabaddi for Protection, as well as its sustainability and impact.

## 2.2. Methods of Data Collection

The consultant deployed five (5) lines of evidence for this process evaluation. The methods and research areas outlined in the ToR and the research proposal were used to develop the research instruments for the study. Separate research instruments were developed for each of the stakeholders by consultants. Tdh reviewed the research instruments and signed off before the start of fieldwork. The adopted lines of evidence are mapped below for the competence they lend to the study.

**Table 1: Lines of evidence and supporting evaluation methodology**

Lines of evidence	Methods	Impact at Household Level	Impact at the Community Level	Impact at the Individual Level	Unexpected/ Unintended Impact
<b>Desk Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Proposal</li> <li>Theory of Change, LFA</li> <li>Literature review</li> </ul>	Contribution analysis	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Key Informant Interviews (KIs) - South 24 Parganas Only</b>	Qualitative analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Household Survey – South 24 Parganas Only</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patha Pratima and Gosaba</li> <li>Parents and Children</li> </ul>	Statistical analysis	Yes	No	Yes	No
<b>Focus Group Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children</li> <li>Parents</li> </ul>	<b>Qualitative analysis</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Interviews: Remote/FGDs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Leaders</li> </ul>	Qualitative analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 2.3. Tools for Data Collection

**Desk Review:** The study commenced with a desk review of the available project information, including the project proposal and K4E toolkit, among others. The main objective of the desk research was to formalize the research methodology and understanding of the various project components, objectives, contextual factors, and analytical and reporting structures for the study. It also provided information on available data and reports and aided in refining the research matrix accordingly.

**Key Informant Interviews:** The qualitative research methods included Key Informant Interviews (KIs) with a range of stakeholders at the village, block, and district levels. Detailed guidelines for Key Informant Interviews were prepared, and these interactions were done through guidelines emerging out of the research areas. All of these KIs were completed during the field mission in Malda, Patharpratima, and Gosaba.

**Focus Group Discussions (Youth Leaders, Parents, and Children):** A qualitative survey through Focused Group Discussions was another critical line of evidence that formed part of the overall methodology of the research study. FGDs were done with parents and children's groups in Malda (Youth Leaders), Patharpratima, and Gosaba (Parents and Children). Local Implementation partners provided the mobilisation support. Further, FGDs ensure that different segments pertinent to the program are well represented in the groups.

**Quantitative Survey (Parents and Children):** Household Surveys included quantitative surveys with Parents and Children in Patharpratima and Gosaba. Parents and children from the same household were



interviewed. The Children section of the tool used the UNICEF's Life Skills Measurement Tool (LSMT) and drew references from the MHPSS toolkit.

**Structured Interviews with Youths Leaders:** Lastly, the evaluation used structured remote interviews with Youth Leaders in Berhampur and Siliguri as part of the data collection toolkit. The remote interviews were done in a group of 3-4 youth leaders and conducted using an interview guideline prepared during the project's inception stage.

## 2.4. Sampling Plan and Size

In line with the methodology outlined in the ToR, a mixed-method research design was used to drive the data collection activities. Through structured client interviews via the online platform Kobotool, a quantitative survey formed the core of the evaluation process. The household survey had two components, covering the parents and children of the household. Considering the research design and objective of the study, a one-sample formula is used to arrive at an adequate sample size. A sample of 270 households with a margin of error of 5% at a 95% confidence level is estimated to have sufficient power to provide robust estimates. **Against a target of 270 households, 292 households were surveyed as part of a quantitative survey.**

**Qualitative Research** - The qualitative research under the evaluation of the program included Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with Parents, Children, and Youth Leaders and Key Informant Interviews with Tdh, Prajaak, Local Implementation Partner, Youth Leaders, and government stakeholders at the village, block and district level. Additionally, In-Depth Interviews were conducted with the project beneficiaries in Malda to capture the change stories.

S. No	Qualitative Research Method	Sample Size	# of participants
1	Focus Group Discussion – Youth Leaders	3	30
2.	Focus Group Discussion – Children	6	125
3.	Focus Group Discussion – Parents	2	30
4.	Key Informant Interviews – Youth Leaders	3	12
5.	Key Informant Interviews – Govt stakeholders	15	15

## 2.5. Ethical Compliance

Written consent was obtained from all research participants before commencing interviews. The consultants used the format shared by Tdh (Refer to Annexure I for the format) to obtain the written consent of the research participants. In the case of the children, permission was obtained from their parent or guardian. The informed consent ensured that individuals had a comprehensive understanding of the research's objectives, processes, potential risks, and benefits, fostering trust and promoting voluntary participation while safeguarding participants' well-being and privacy. The consultant adhered to ethical guidelines, anonymized sensitive information, and secured data storage, ensuring the highest level of protection for participants' data while consistently respecting their trust and privacy during this evaluation.

### **3. Evaluation Findings**

This section of the report captures the findings from the process evaluation. Results have been captured into two Chapters; Chapter 1 covers the project findings in Patharpratima and Gosaba, while Chapter 2 covers the research findings across Malda, Bahrapur, and Siliguri. The section begins with a detail of the situation and demographic context of the intervention areas.

# Chapter 1 – Patharpratima and Gosaba



### 3.1. Respondent Profile

The evaluation also delved into understanding the socio-economic profile of the targeted beneficiaries. The exhibit presented below captures the socio-economic profile of the respondents.

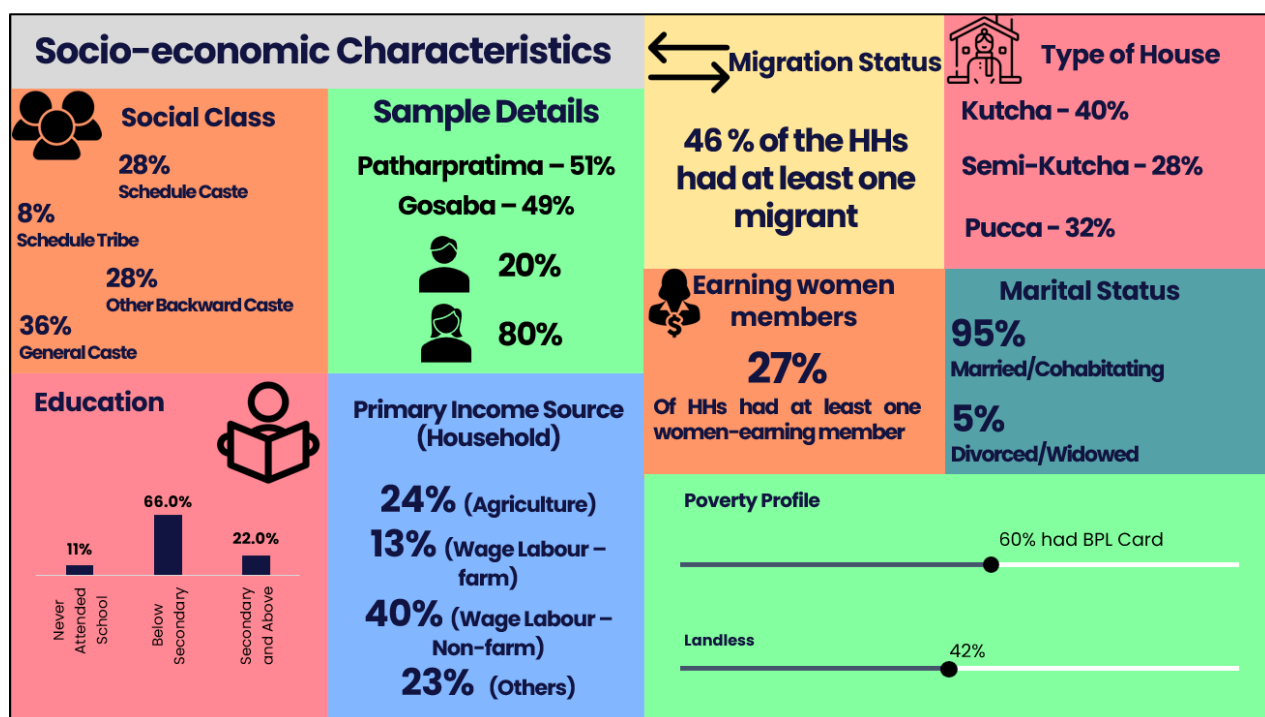


Figure 5: Socioeconomic Profile - Respondents from South 24 Parganas

The demographic data collected reveal that the study area, South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, exhibits a diverse socio-economic landscape. In terms of gender distribution, there were 58 male respondents (20%) and 234 female respondents (80%), with Gosaba and Patharpratima blocks contributing almost equally. The underlying skewness may also be a representation of male migration in the study area.

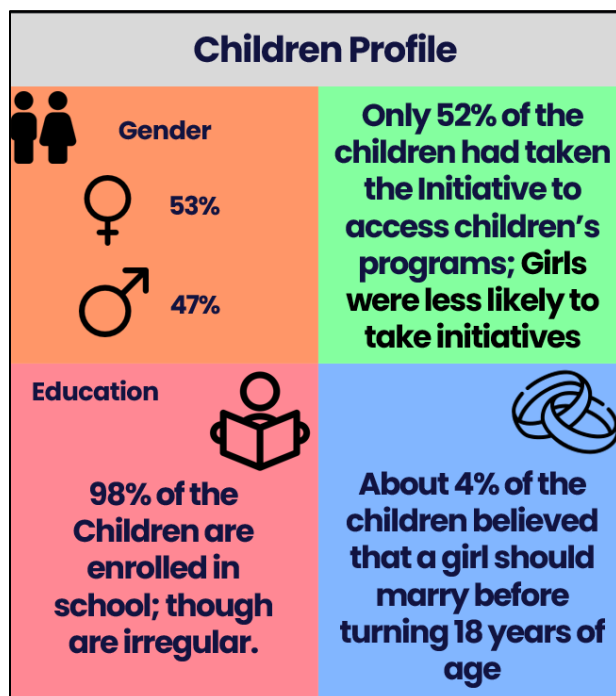


Figure 6: Children Profile

About 46% of the households had at least one migrant member, and it was also represented as the primary source of household income, wherein more than 40% of the households were dependent on non-farm wage labor. A notable presence of pisciculture (14%) and agriculture (24%) was also observed. About 70% of the households had only one earning member, often the migrant member of the household. A single stream of income for the households further highlighted their vulnerabilities.

Economic status exhibited a notable disparity, with 60% of households classified as below the poverty line (BPL), particularly in Patharpratima. Housing conditions ranged from kutcha to pucca houses, with a significant proportion (40%) living in kutcha houses or semi-kutcha houses (28%). Another indicator of economic deprivation was the high prevalence of landlessness. About 42% of

households were landless. Lower educational attainments of the respondents were also stark, with only 22% of respondents completing their secondary education. The economic status of the households living below the poverty line was particularly stark. More than 60% of the households were dependent of wage labour and 70% of them had only one earning member – often the migrant member of the household. Three-fourth of them lived in Kutcha or Semi-kutcha houses and 45% of these households were landless, highlighting their vagaries and economic deprivation. When looked through the lens of caste, Schedule Caste and Tribes were the most marginalized and impoverished. Overall, the socio-economic profile indicated a high prevalence of economic deprivation and people embracing migration as a coping mechanism to fight their way out of poverty traps.

### 3.2. Migration: Status and Belief

Migration is not a new phenomenon for people living in the Sundarbans region. Since the population of the region is dependent on natural resources and agriculture for their income, any impact on it affects their livelihood. As one of the most climate-vulnerable locations in the world, the repeat incidences of natural disasters have uprooted families and decimated the incomes of residents who have traditionally relied heavily on agriculture and fishing for their livelihoods. Migration has been a survival strategy for residents of the Sundarbans for long. The evaluation enquired about the persisting status of migration, perceptions, and beliefs related to migration. Furthermore, it enquired about the types of migration and followed it up with the decision-making related to migration. Finally, it assessed the incidences of migration among children and adolescents. As mentioned in the socio-economic profile section, the quantitative study found a high level of migration, with about half of the households having **at least one migrant member**.

The study also enquired about the various beliefs and perceptions of the respondents in their communities. **Results suggest that 88% of the respondents believed that migration has increased in the past ten years.** And more than half of them (61%) considered the present incidences of migration as high **in the target communities**. During the qualitative research, it was observed that at least one member of a family

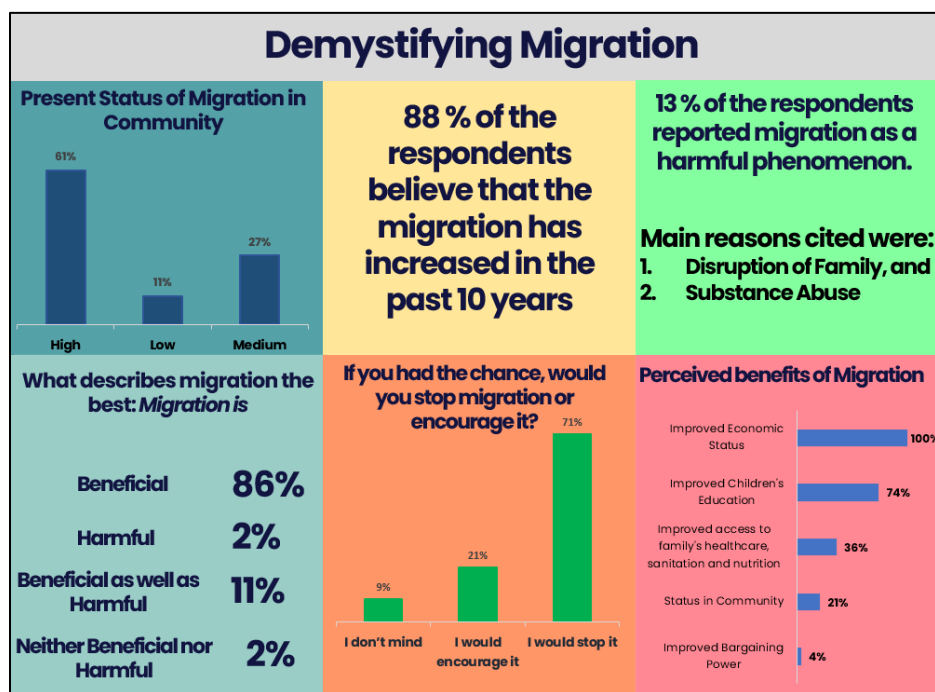


Figure 7: Migration Status and Beliefs

migrates to other regions for work, and the major destination corridors were Kerala, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore. Observations suggested that families were forced to undertake adaptive measures by migrating out in the hope of reconstructing their lives, livelihoods, and homes.

Environmental stresses in the Sundarbans, directly and indirectly, disrupt livelihood security and contribute to economic circumstances that necessitate the migration of people of the region. Salinisation is

threatening agriculture; The decline in fish populations impacts fishing communities; Forest-based

livelihoods are adversely impacted by changes in the composition of mangrove species, which is reducing the value of standing timber and honey production. As a result, there is a growing trend of people shifting from a traditional farm-based and natural resource-based economy to a labour-based one. The qualitative analyses (FGDs and KIIs) of this evaluation have validated migration to be an increasing trend as a long-term adaptation and short-term coping strategy to the environmental crisis.

---

*Migration is so common that most of the family members can be together only during festivals.  
My father and uncle visit home only during the Pujo – **Boys from FGD in Ramganga.***

---

Most households (97%) believed that migration brought benefits to their households and communities. For households, it improved their economic status, access to quality education and healthcare, status in the community, and bargaining power. Among the cited reasons, the most prominent concerns were the disruption of family dynamics and the potential for migration to lead to substance abuse. The qualitative results corroborated with the results as most of the respondents reported economic incentives as a key benefit from migration, but few of the respondents also highlighted increased instances of substance abuse, especially among young migrants. Many of the young migrants gain their newfound freedom and financial independence upon securing employment in their destination areas and then fall prey to bad habits such as alcoholism, substance abuse, etc. Those who migrate out are reported to be treated with a difference by the community when they visit their homes during breaks. The social dynamics and the relationships change quickly over time once individuals migrate out. Exposure to city life alters their lifestyles, cultural practices and social networks. Youth specifically find it difficult to re-adjust to the village life, and also experience alienation by their own community members. Young girls who migrate out, face stronger rejection from extended families and community members. There are still social stigmas associated with young girls migrating out and working in the cities. These adversely affect the sense of belongingness and network of support for the migrants in their local communities. The youth have reported that the process of assimilation in the destination areas is also not easy. There are language and cultural barriers, which creates social isolation, loneliness and feeling of being excluded. In the project target community, migration is perceived as a process that lead to the separation of family members. This results in distress and anxiety among family members.

The access to and use of smartphones among children and youth has increased manifold in recent times. **With the emergence of the digital world and access to technologies like smartphones and various social network applications, communities are better connected.** Interviews with the key stakeholders of this project have highlighted the fact that people who migrate out are connected to their social circle in the villages. Information is exchanged on a daily basis between friends and family. Over the years, with the ease of communication, better information, and open exchanges, the taboo and stigma related to migration have lessened. This has substantially reduced the cases and incidence of coerced and unsafe migration among people, especially among children and women. While the use of technology has enabled children and youth to connect to the outside world and gain exposure through the virtual world, they fall into the trap of digital addiction. Parents and teachers have univocally blamed the excessive time spent on gadgets for children's distraction and lack of focus on academics and recreation.

---

*"Migration brings in money that we need to survive. Our lands are no longer fertile, and remittance is the main source of income for my household" – Adult FGD participant in Patharpratima.*

---



*“Taking a lot of risks, people are migrating since the wage is much higher outside West Bengal. Also, with more exposure people are aspiring better standard of living and to acquire that more income is required” – Boys from FGD in Ramganga.*

Despite the perceived benefits of migration, about three-fourths of the respondents expressed a desire to cease migration if given the choice. The qualitative findings elucidate this seemingly contradictory result. Within the community, migration is predominantly viewed as a temporary phenomenon. Migrants often harbor a strong inclination to eventually return to their villages after securing their families' future, undertaking repairs or constructing pucca houses, and acquiring land or assets. The prospect of enhancing the quality of life in villages appears relatively achievable within 3 to 4 years of working in big cities.

The separation experienced by migrant families is deeply felt, especially concerning the well-being of children left under the care of a single parent or relative. However, parents are reluctant to uproot their children due to unfavorable living conditions in urban areas, where access to schools and healthcare is challenging and services are costly. **In retrospect, the separation from family, children, and roots is not aligned with the people's desires. Consequently, if presented with the choice, there is a strong inclination to return home, with a preference for alternative livelihood opportunities within the local region.**

*“The experience of migrant workers is not good, but they are left with no other options, especially post cyclones when the agri lands become saline, livelihood in agriculture became very limited; even fishery as an income option is less viable due to erratic weather conditions” – FGD participant in Patharpratima*

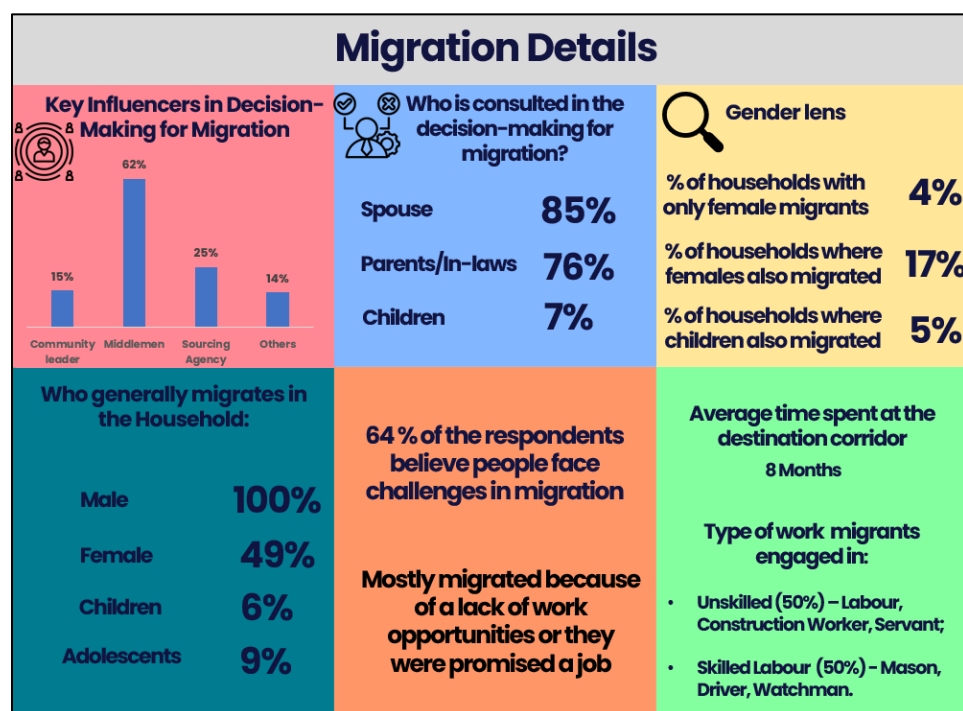


Figure 8: Migration Details

### Migration Patterns

Migration has also emerged as a socialized behavior that is accepted by the household, the community, and the local government. Based on the interactions with various stakeholders, three broad patterns of migration have emerged: (a) long-term migration to distant big cities in search of work, eventually leading to permanent migration; (b) seasonal migration during paddy-sowing and harvesting seasons to neighbouring districts as farm labour, and (c) short-term migration to the nearest big cities for

informal employment in masonry, wage labours, domestic work, and caregiving.

The quantitative study revealed that **50% of the surveyed migrants were engaged in unskilled labour**, such as domestic and construction work. **The remaining 50% migrated to engage in skilled work** as masons, carpenters, and drivers. The average time spent at the destination corridor was 8 months, and the range of time spent in the past 12 months was 1-12 months, complementing the types of migration mentioned in the section above.

Temporary cyclic migration was found to be the major form of migration where labour migration is facilitated through informal processes by independent contractors, familial connections, and social networks. The quantitative findings corroborated these observations, as **62% of the migration was influenced by middlemen, followed by 25% of sourcing agencies**. Although these individuals are not classified as forced environmental migrants, climate change events contribute to the lack of employment opportunities that prompt their migration.

The triggers for migration were also assessed as part of qualitative research inquiries. Results unveiled that the lucrative factor is the advance (average INR 8-10 K) made to the migrant workers. It is usually provided before the migration and is helpful for them in paying outstanding debts. Another critical factor triggering the migration was the lifestyle choices of youths in the communities, and the study noted a cyclical nature to them. Young migrant workers would return to their villages with expensive clothes, mobile phones, motorbikes, and other aspirational items, which attracted other youths in the community to migrate and embrace those aspirational lifestyle choices. **This corroborated with the survey analysis, where 21% of the HHs quoted that migration leads to improved social status of the family in the community**. Once a community has seen the perks and benefits of migrating to a big city and the event of migration is socially accepted, it has rippling influencing effects among the larger population of the village.

---

*“Children whose parents are away enjoy better lifestyles that are distinct from those of other children of the villages. When their parents visit home, these children receive gifts in the form of trendy clothes, accessories, and even smartphones. They flaunt these gifts before their peers. Families that migrate eat city food like pasta and burgers. This invokes deep desires for a similar lifestyle among the other children.” (FGD Participant from Parent’s group from Gosaba)*

---

The study also sought to understand the migration patterns within the household. Results from the quantitative survey found that out-migration among men was the highest. **Men migrated compulsorily from most of the migrant households. Only a few (17%) took along their spouse, and even fewer (5%) carried their children**. Only women migrant from households was a rarity. During qualitative research, it was reported that there are many cases where couples had gone out of the islands in search of alternative livelihoods, leaving their children behind in the care and supervision of immediate families or relatives. Additionally, a prevalence of marriage migration among adolescent girls and youth was observed. Migration among youth, especially males, has been growing for purposes of higher education and engagement in economic activities, and instances were reported where boys changed their age on ID cards, e.g., Aadhar Card, to get into the formal job market in a city. **Families pushed young boys to migrate to earn, while girls migrated due to marriage. Even though the underlying reasons differed, the push for migration was constant**.

The discussion with parents and government stakeholders highlighted **Cyclone Aila in 2009 as a landmark incident that led to a sudden upsurge of out-migration from the Sundarbans region**. COVID-19 and the stringent lockdowns enforced distressed reverse migration, compelling people to come back to their villages in the Sundarbans after they lost their jobs in the cities. With a surge of return migration, loss of jobs, and inadequate public health facilities making living conditions dismal in the villages,



the region was shattered by the series of cyclones that followed, causing irreparable damage to the lives of people living in the Sundarbans. Migration became inevitable for survival again.

### Decision-making and Challenges Related to Migration

Migration can strain familial bonds through physical separation, disrupt traditional roles, and weaken emotional connections, impacting children's upbringing and family stability. Hence, the decision-making around it is consultative, and the opinions of immediate family members are key to it. Results from the quantitative survey suggest a high participation of adult family members. **In more than three-fourths of cases, spouses, parents, or in-laws are consulted, and their opinions are valued, but children rarely have a voice in such decision-making. The survey found that only 7% of households involve children in migration decision-making.** The absence of parental guidance and involvement in decision-making can be traumatic for children, impacting their upbringing, socialization, and sense of agency. There was rarely a mention of children's consultation during the decision-making on migration during qualitative research inquiries as well.

The evaluation also enquired about the challenges related to migration and **results indicate that more than 64% of the respondents believed that people face challenges during migration.** During the qualitative inquiries, many reported instances of agony and trauma the migrant labourers face during their transit and stay at their destination. Lack of quality housing, poor access to safe water and sanitation facilities, and deprived benefits of government schemes were key challenges faced by migrant workers at their destination corridors.

Migrants who were in unskilled, unorganized sector jobs frequently faced a higher risk of injury and health crises, especially due to the lack of safety measures and medical facilities provided by employers in the destination places. Migrant labourers often come back to the village with severe illnesses. The findings emphasize the need for better data on other measures of migrant safety, including the occupational safety and health of migrant workers. Panchayat has almost no data on the issue which can be taken into account. **Maintaining a Register of Migrants at the Local Administrative Office is highly recommended as a necessary practice to track migration and provide the necessary support to migrants and their families.**

While the trend of rural-to-urban migration increased rapidly in the last decade, it has come with a high personal cost. A significant number of respondents mentioned broken family situations due to migration. Women who stay back are burdened with multiple tasks at home and outside. Drudgery and loneliness set in. Incidents of elopement among married women were reported, particularly for those whose husbands migrated out. Likewise, men living apart from family in the cities are involved in new relationships. In such situations, children end up being the worst sufferers facing neglect.

### Incidence of Migration among Children and Adolescents

The quantitative survey results reveal that only a small proportion (2%) of migrants were children or adolescents and engaged in work. However, the qualitative inquiries also revealed some cases of changing the age in government IDs for getting work at the destination corridors. Push for getting a job from families was also noted in the case of boys for migration. The burden of debt on families or the lure of money tricked families into pushing their boys to migrate.

In the case of girls, marriage and elopements were another form of migration. It was reported during the FGDs that many families also wait for their daughters to turn 18 for their marriage since they receive benefits from the government under the Kanyashree Prakalpa<sup>9</sup> scheme. During the FGDs with children and youth,

---

it was mentioned that excessive control of parents on the mobility and freedom of girls left them feeling suffocated. These girls become desperate to liberate themselves with the hope of experiencing the world outside their village and to enjoy freedom of choice at par with men and boys. The slightest trigger and lure of a life of freedom make them gullible to the promises of the city life offered by a boyfriend or a migration agent. Additionally, the Sundarbans are reported to have a high incidence of girl child trafficking.<sup>10</sup> Data from the survey reveals that a soaring **62% of the migration is influenced by middlemen**. Generally known as 'thikadar', they contact the workers and share information about wage rates, work sites, travel details etc. The intermediaries or agents predominantly originate from local communities and often possess extensive networks that facilitate the recruitment of human resources across regions, including unskilled or semi-skilled labor. In contemporary times, these intermediaries increasingly utilize social media platforms or leverage contact details obtained from existing migrant workers to initiate communication and recruit additional labor from similar backgrounds. By collectivizing group of potential migrants, they form a group and take them to work sites. The migrants are informed about the expected wage rate and job availability. Many of them also pay the migrants a small token of advance, which is adjusted with the wages later. No instances of commission from the migrants were noted during the qualitative inquiries. There are instances where migrant workers actively participate in persuading other individuals from their native communities to pursue employment opportunities elsewhere. Over the time, few of such migrants also turn into thikadars.

---

*Recently, a neighbor of mine set off for Delhi in search of work. When we met upon her return, she spoke of Delhi as a place where money flowed freely, suggesting that my financial woes could be solved by joining her as a domestic worker. Although I declined her offer, a few other women from our community chose to migrate with her support. It appears they're now thriving financially – FGD participant from the Parents' group in Patharpratima*

---

Girls who are pushed into child marriage are faced with teenage pregnancies and associated health dangers, pressures of domestic responsibilities, and consequential limitations on their mobility and educational aspirations. Boys who are forced into the labour market are also faced with health dangers, wage exploitation, and limitations on their educational attainment. These situations stand out as examples of gender-based violence that stems from deep-rooted gender and social norms, reinforcing traditional prohibitive gender roles for both boys and girls, contributing to the 14% of other factors **influencing migration, especially among children and adolescents**.

### 3.3. Climate Change

Climate change is upon us, and the residents of the Sundarbans have to endure its effects more than others in India. The evaluation enquired about the perception and impact of climate change in the two blocks of South 24 Parganas. Furthermore, the study deep-dived into understanding the nexus of climate change and migration in the Sundarbans. Lastly, it assessed the present practices of disaster response and preparedness in the community.

Results from the quantitative study revealed that **99% of the respondents reported experiencing climate change in the past ten years. The qualitative research revealed that climate change has far-reaching effects on agricultural productivity and food security**. This has been quoted as the prime reason for majority of people migrating from rural areas to the big cities in search of better livelihoods. Various studies have brought out four major climate change outcomes for the Sundarbans region – **sea surface temperature changes, sea level rise and land erosion, salinity changes and biodiversity, and**

---

<sup>10</sup> <https://tdh.rokka.io/dynamic/noop/4e5bdd2040b8df33c3b3c46121fd64be55b70e9e/climate-change-study-sundarbans-ind-by-saciwaters-2022-execu.pdf>

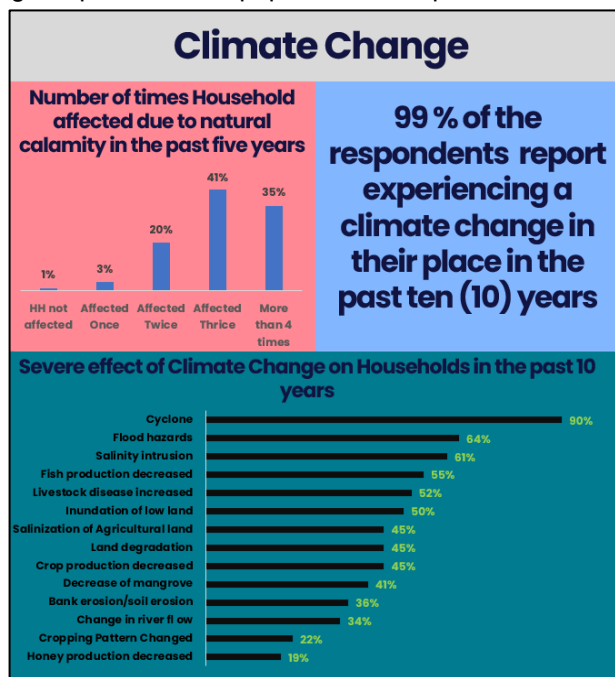
**incidence of cyclonic storms.** Each of these is closely linked to tangible consequences for the socioeconomic and resource outcomes for the populations who live in the Sundarbans. The cumulative impact of climate change leads to a cascading set of consequences, including increasing poverty, reduced food production, loss of livelihood security, negative impacts on health, large-scale migration, and increased economic and geopolitical tensions and instabilities. Numerous studies have also identified climate change as one of the determining factors for the health outcomes of this region. There is a clear indication that with the increasing frequency of cyclones, floods, and droughts there are chances of increased incidences and epidemic outbreaks of infectious diseases<sup>11</sup>. 41% and 35% of the households interviewed have reported having been affected due to climate-change-induced natural calamity at least three and more than four times, respectively, in the past decade. **In other words, three out of four households have faced damage due to the natural calamity in the past 10 years. Given the economic profile of the sample households, one can imagine the impact of such damage on their life.** Qualitative findings highlight that households often incur debt primarily for housing repair or construction, compelling them to migrate. Linking the two results, a plausible linkage between climate change and migration is established.

---

*“Earlier, we could play throughout the year. But now, playing during summer has become rare; even going out from home between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. has become difficult”. – Children from FGD in Ramganga*

---

Sundarbans are known for their unparalleled biodiversity; however, climate change is rampaging it more frequently than ever. The increase in salinity of water threatens freshwater aquatic life such as fish and giant prawns. The population is dependent on these for sustenance and livelihoods. The rise of ocean



**Figure 9: Climate Change and its Effect**

levels has pushed the saline water upstream into estuaries and rivers, forcing freshwater life into the last remaining saline-free waters available. In addition, salinity intrusion decreases the suitability of freshwater sources available for agricultural crop irrigation and drinking water. Hence, in Patharpratima, the yearly crop production has reduced considerably in the past year years. In Gosaba, irrigation is not possible due to the salinity of groundwater. **61% of the respondents have confirmed the intrusion salinity in freshwater sources and groundwater. Farmers are, therefore, able to produce only one crop during the rainy season.** Rampant usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides is high and severely compromises the nutrient value of crops, fruits, and vegetables. Respondents of the KII uniformly reported that there has been a noticeable change in the yearly seasonal calendar and it profoundly impacted their food and nutritional security.

---

*“Earlier, we enjoyed six seasons that also brought in various seasonal festivities and cultural practices. We only have three seasons now*

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://tdh.rokka.io/dynamic/noop/4e5bdd2040b8df33c3b3c46121fd64be55b70e9e/climate-change-study-sundarbans-ind-by-saciwaters-2022-execu.pdf>

– summer, monsoons, and winter.” (Upo Pradhan, Digambarpur Gram Panchayat, Patharpratima)

---

**Respondents uniformly reported that the summers have become long, hot, and dry, leading to drought conditions and groundwater depletion.** This severely affected their access to drinking water and water for irrigation. The time spent in farming and fishing is now restricted to early morning hours and barely an hour before sundown. About **45% of the respondents feel that crop production has decreased, and 22% feel that the cropping pattern has changed. A reduction in fish production was reported at 55%.** Reduction in agricultural yield and change in cropping patterns prompted the farmers to apply fertilizers and pesticides more than ever. It further compounded their health problems.

---

*“Agriculture has become absolutely dependent on fertilizer and pesticides, and the amount is getting higher day by day, but still, the production and the taste of vegetables are declining.” – Parent FGD participant Ramganga*

---

The monsoon season has become erratic and has been getting longer due to increased evaporation during the intense summer months. The region faces major tropical cyclones in the form of hurricanes. About 90% of the respondents have mentioned the occurrence of cyclones as a major impact of climate change, followed by flood hazards reported at 64%. According to them, the frequency and intensity of these storms have increased manifold in recent times—in the last decade—bringing destruction to lives and property.

The lives of the people of the Sundarbans are highly dependent on the ecological balance provided by the mangrove forest that supports biodiversity, protects the coastal areas, and sustains the livelihoods of millions of people in the region. Climate experts across the world have brought to focus the need to preserve and nurture the mangroves to protect the ecological integrity of this unique and fragile ecosystem. More than **41% of the respondents mentioned that mangroves are declining.** The receding of the mangroves coupled with the concurrent storms have also resulted in **bank/soil erosion (reported by 36% of the respondents).** The loss of biodiversity is visible, affecting various flora and fauna and potentially resulting in a **decrease in honey production (as reported by 19% of the respondents).**

### **The Nexus of Climate Change, Migration, and its impact on children**

Evaluation results from the quantitative data underscore a profound shift in the climatic conditions of the region over the past decade, as evidenced by significant responses indicating changes in the climate. These changes triggered a cascade of adverse effects on households, with a substantial percentage reporting negative impacts on their lives and livelihoods. The influence of climate change on migration patterns was evident, with **an overwhelming 87% of respondents attributing increased migration to environmental factors. This trend is also pronounced among children and adolescents, with 60% of respondents indicating a surge in their migration rates.** Even though the quantitative survey found that only a small proportion (2%) of migrants were children or adolescents and engaged in work. Though, when these data points juxtaposed, the study report an increasing trend of migration amongst adolescents and youth and climate change has a triggering role in it.

Most of the households have reported that climate change has impacted agriculture, salination of fresh water, and fishing/pisciculture, which have been the key drivers for triggering migration from the community.

**Education systems grappled with the fallout of climate-related events, as evidenced by high rates of irregular school attendance (70%) and dropout rates (27%).** Schools remain shut, as these are turned into temporary shelters, and the connectivity through roads is affected, which in turn prevents children from

accessing school. These findings underscored the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to mitigate

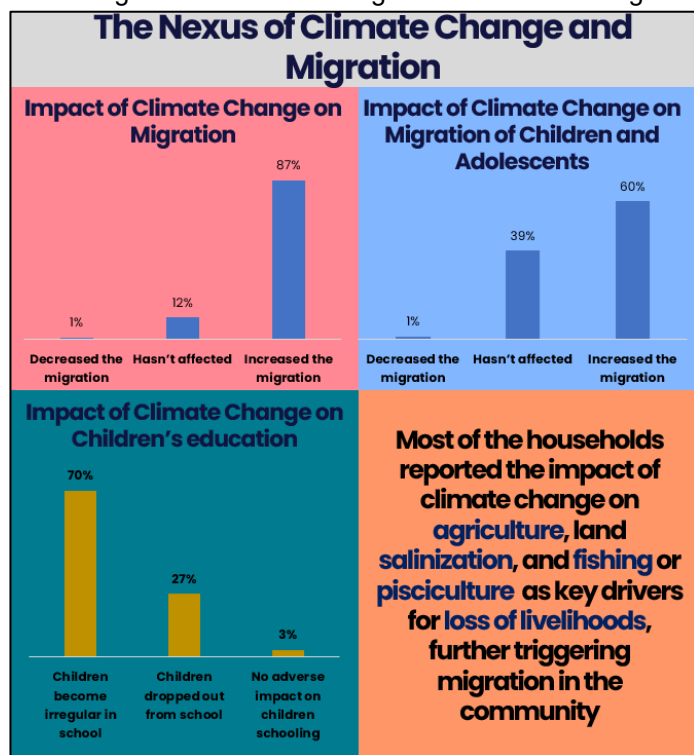


Figure 10: Nexus of Climate Change and Migration

the adverse effects of climate change and protect vulnerable populations, particularly children and adolescents, from its detrimental impacts. Interaction with children has brought out that their views are not being asked for, and they are rarely consulted, and their opinions are not taken into consideration during disaster management. **While children remain one of the most vulnerable and affected groups, there was limited scope for children to talk about disaster-related risks (physical, social, and mental), and their collective voice was yet to be heard and incorporated into any action plans.**

Interaction with key stakeholders revealed that child protection mechanisms at the local level, especially for children affected by natural calamities, are neither child-friendly nor efficient. Though Village Level Child Protection Committees (LCPC) are formed, they are not functional. The Anwesha clinics are poorly managed due to a dearth of staff. Children's views can be meaningful when children have access to the right information

about events that affect them and the availability of services that are meant for them and are given the opportunity to express their experiences. As per the information gathered through various interactions with stakeholders in the target geography, the community's response to climate change and frequent natural calamities like cyclones and storms has primarily been in the form of migration as an adaptive measure. In the event of this coping mechanism, children, women, and the elderly stand out as the most vulnerable and affected groups, as they are left behind to confront the impending disaster. The lack of data has not brought out insights into the impact on people with disabilities. There is a tremendous onus that now lies with local governance, the community, and local civil society organizations to invest in building the resilience of these vulnerable groups through strategic and focused interventions.

The advent of this project, 'Kabaddi for Empowerment,' is a promising intervention centered around building resilience among children and youth in coping with the effects of climate change and natural disasters in the Sundarbans. The stakeholders and target audience of the program interviewed during this evaluation assignment expressed that there is value and need for such intervention, highlighting the relevance of the project in the targeted geography.

### Correlation between Climate Change, Natural Calamity, and Migration

The houses that are made of mud and straw are destroyed in torrential rain and strong winds. The residents of these houses are in the process of converting them into concrete houses to withstand the destructive forces of the weather in the region. The annual rains also flood the ground level of the houses, leading to the destruction of assets, essentials, and belongings. Families are working towards adding another floor to their houses (double-story) for safety and protection during the rains and cyclones. In this endeavor, families are availing the Pradhan Mantri Abhas Yojana, which provides an amount of Rs.1.5 Lakhs to the family for house construction or repair work. This scheme has motivated many households to begin construction work, which is of utmost necessity. In due time, through the process of building the houses, families spend much more than they ever estimated. The cost of construction of a basic concrete house in the village is observed to be nothing less in comparison to prices in an urban setup. In the



end, families end up spending about 5-6 Lakhs in the construction/repair work of their houses. This puts them in debt, typically from informal sources. In order to repay the loan amount, couples migrate to cities like Gurgaon, Delhi, and Kolkata for jobs. They typically stay away for 4-5 years to earn enough to repay the loan.

## Preparedness against Climate Change Events

The study gathered information on community preparedness against disasters brought on by cyclones in recent years. All reported that emergency preparedness was lacking considerably prior to Aila hitting the region with widespread destruction in 2009. Since the area is densely populated the people have greater vulnerability to these tropical cyclones. Additionally, children are worst hit because they have limited ability to respond to emergencies without outside assistance during evacuation. Children are the most vulnerable during disasters, suffering doubly. Initially, they struggle to escape or fend for themselves, especially the very young, prone to injury. Then, post-disaster, they face separation from family and loss of homes, leading to psychological trauma. This trauma often manifests as post-traumatic stress disorder, marked by symptoms like anxiety, depression, and self-injury. Social vulnerability exacerbates their plight, as their low societal status limits their ability to cope and exposes them to exploitation and abuse by anti-social elements. This vulnerability, encompassing physical, psychological, and social aspects, amplifies the disaster risk they face, particularly in situations of intense disasters

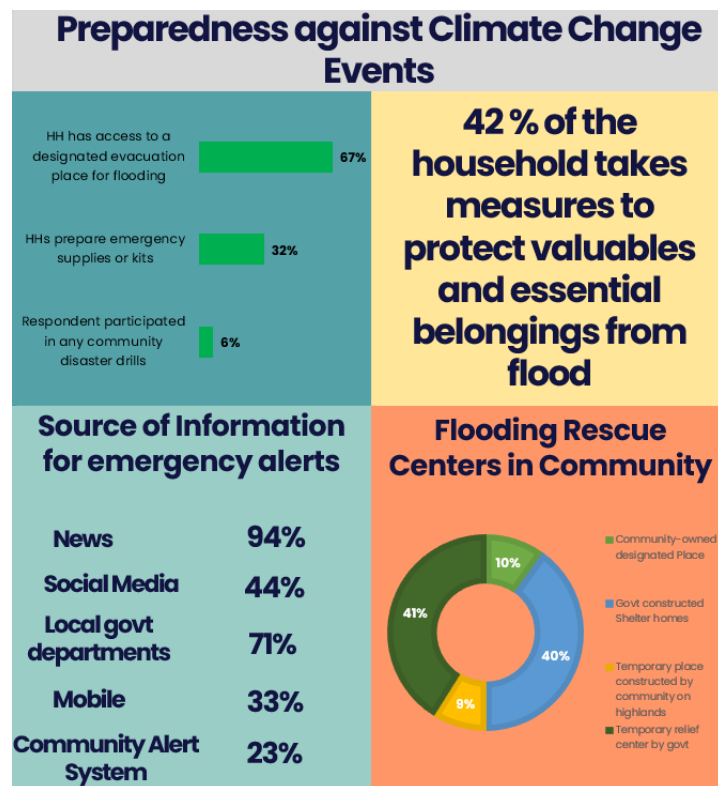


Figure 11: Disaster Preparedness

and low coping capacity.

Similarly, the impact of cyclonic disasters is comparatively higher for the female population as compared to their male counterparts, as they have limited mobility and access to resources. People living in Kutch houses are extremely vulnerable to tropical cyclones-induced gusting winds, heavy rains, and storm surges. Since then, the local government has brought in certain measures for disaster management, community preparedness, and mitigating the damage from such natural disasters. **National emergency agencies and risk management institutions have introduced four-phase emergency response activities during hazardous events: a) response capability, b) dissemination and communication, c) monitoring and warning service, and d) risk knowledge.** Spatial datasets are collected and analyzed from different sources, as shown by using geospatial techniques. Recently, the early warning systems (EWS) and timely dissemination of information have improved in the region. All the community residents, including children, know the early warnings and the protocols to follow. **However, only 6% of the respondents reported being a part of any community disaster drills.** The local government office played a crucial role in information dissemination. As gathered from the survey, **71% of the emergency alerts are channeled through the local government department.** Mobile vans make rounds in the villages with the announcements. TVs, radios, and various mobile channels also play a crucial role in spreading the early warning message. About **94% of the respondents have reported that they follow news channels for emergency alerts.** With the increasing penetration of smartphones and mobile, many households rely on

social media and mobile phones for seeking information about emergency alerts. Many households still rely heavily on their nearby neighbourhood and family members for early warnings.

### Response to Natural Calamities like Cyclones and Floods

Regarding the role of local government, almost all respondents reported being satisfied with the efficacy of the early warning mechanisms, evacuation to safe shelters, and provision of immediate response kits (dry food, drinking water, hygiene kits, on-spot medication, etc.) before cyclone or heavy rainfall. **About 67% of the surveyed households reported having access to a designated evacuation place during cyclones and floods.** In response to the destruction caused by Aila, the local authorities constructed Cyclone Shelters in the villages. However, given the population density of Gosaba and Patharpratima, these shelters were inadequate in number and capacity to cater to the population seeking support. Additionally, the school premises and health centers were turned into temporary shelters in the event of cyclones and floods. **The survey highlighted that 40% of the Rescue Shelters are government-constructed, whereas 41% were temporary relief shelters arranged by the government when the storms/floods arrive.** Women and children are given preference in availing of these shelters. Neighbours and family members also offered their houses to host families/children who are more susceptible to impending damages. Interaction with the community revealed that the shelters also create space for livestock such as cows, buffaloes, goats, and dogs. However, it has been reported that conditions and services provided in these rescue shelters were not up to the standards, especially in the realm of health services. Many households reported that they preferred to remain in their current residences rather than transfer to a safer location/shelter, even after receiving early warning information due to these issues.

Elaborating on the children's experiences in these shelter homes, the study finds that it took up to six months for the children and families to return back to their places. Loss of house, livestock and documents affected the children negatively. One of the girls broke down during the FGD, recalling the horror of losing her goats, highlighting the psychosocial burden she bore due to flood and resettlement. The sub-standard services and facilities at the shelter homes affected the children negatively, as explained above.

---

"When the early warning information of a storm or cyclone is received, my family starts to pack things. Since it is not possible to take everything, I pack my books, a few sets of clothes, school certificates, and my favourite toys to take along. My mother organizes dry food, clothes, jewelry, and money. My father sorts out all the essential documents like ID cards, property papers, bank documents, money, and electronic gadgets. We also make provision of safe shelter for our animals at home." (Child respondent in Gosaba)

---

Despite the improved early warning systems and information dissemination, which is typically 24-48 hours prior to the storm hitting the region, the duration was never enough to manage assets and necessities. **Only 32% of the respondents have shared that they prepare any emergency supplies or kits.** Most households reported a loss of crucial documents and precious belongings. **About 42% of the households mentioned taking essentials and belongings to the Shelter when taking refuge during floods and cyclones. Loss of animal lives leaves children and women in deep emotional trauma and sadness.** Households have become averse to keeping animals like cows and goats, with the increased frequency of these storms and inadequate shelter facilities for the animals.

### 3.4. Psychosocial Resilience

Existing literature suggests that the impacts of climate change on children are not always straightforward and easily predictable. These impacts vary and depend on context and are facilitated by a host of socio-

cultural, economic, ecological, and/or political factors.<sup>12</sup> In the previous sections, the evaluation has been able to identify the following key outcomes of climate change in the Sundarbans region of West Bengal: incidences of cyclones and floods; salinity intrusion on fresh/groundwater and salination of agricultural land; a decrease of biodiversity; and changes in weather and weather cycle. These have a cumulative impact on the lives of people of the region, leading to loss of livelihoods, loss of property and assets, negative impact on health, increasing poverty, and disrupted access to basic facilities and services like health care, education, and infrastructure. Migration has emerged as an adaptive and coping mechanism.

There is one crucial aspect that often goes amiss when capturing and measuring the impact of climate change on the people. The trauma and stress caused by natural calamities and the impact of climate change have long-lasting psychological and emotional effects on individuals and communities. Children and adolescents are the worst affected. The disruptions in family life induced by migration, uncertainty of the future, loss of loved ones, homes, and livelihoods, exposure to vulnerability and exploitation, and constant battle with the fury of nature contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.

---

*'I live with my paternal grandparents. They are both very caring. My parents work in Delhi, and my younger brother stays with them and studies there. My family comes back home once a year for a month. I miss them. After a month's stay, when they go back, I cry myself to sleep every night. I don't feel like doing anything or talking to anybody. They bring me gifts, but that's not what I want. I await the day when I can stay with them permanently.'* - (Adolescent girl participant in Gosaba)

---

The nature of migration in the region leaves children either in the care of a single parent, typically the mother, or close relatives in cases where both parents migrate. Smart phone penetration has increased in the households of the target geographies. There is at least one smartphone in every family. All stakeholders have reported that ownership of and access to smartphones among children and adolescents have increased manifold in recent times. Children with at least one migrant parent have greater access to mobile phones. The KIIs with stakeholders have categorically highlighted that the increased use of mobile phones by children and adolescents has a detrimental impact on their physical health, mental well-being, and social development. Excessive use of mobile has led to problematic use and addiction-like behaviours in children and adolescents. They are seen to become disconnected from real-world interactions, less engaged in sports and other physical activities, lack focus in academics, and are disinterested in chasing creative pursuits. The lack of vigilance from family and other adults leaves children exposed to inappropriate content viewing (pornography), online predators, cyberbullying, and excessive social networking.

---

*"Girls' exposure to the outside world, through increased mobility and access to smartphones, have expanded their social network and interaction with boys in the community. They exchange messages through WhatsApp. The intimacy between adolescent girls and boys/youth has often led to elopement and their getting married. There are noticeable cases of such under-age marriages in the community in recent times."* (ANM worker in Gosaba)

---

While there is an overarching moral judgment harbored by adults vis a vis the use of mobile phones, especially by girls, there is a common belief among the care providers and peers that the risks of underage marriage among adolescents, in the event of elopement, is very high. The community has witnessed ample cases, which lead to such inferences. In the case of elopement, the family does not accept the girl either

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://tdh.rokka.io/dynamic/noop/4e5bdd2040b8df33c3b3c46121fd64be55b70e9e/climate-change-study-sundarbans-ind-by-saciwaters-2022-execu.pdf>



as a bride or in the capacity of a maiden. The adolescent girl often returns pregnant, which severely puts her and the child at health risk – anemia, malnutrition, delivery-related complications, etc. Underage marriage, being considered null and void in the face of the law, leaves the girl and the child to further social stigma and shame. Underage marriage and potential pregnancy result in the discontinuance of the girl from education, being dependent either on the parents or spouse/partner, and conforming to traditional gender roles within the household. This severely compromises her agency and well-being.

Technology in the hands of children and youth can also facilitate their positive exposure to the world, help them explore diverse career opportunities, and gather information on issues that concern them and their immediate environment. The child respondents have reported that they mostly seek information on early warning signs of an impending natural calamity on mobile phones. 33% of the survey respondents have reported mobile phones being a source of emergency alerts, and 44% receive messages through social media.

---

*“My father gave us a smartphone the last time he came home. I can now see news and other informative videos when any storm is about to hit our region potentially. But I mostly use the phone to watch films and reels. I am also able to chat with my friends on WhatsApp. I spend an hour every day on the phone” (Boy child of a migrant father from Patharpratima)*

---

The interaction with stakeholders in Gosaba and Patharpratima has highlighted the prevalence of various forms of negligence, exploitation, and abuse among children and adolescents. Child marriage is prevalent; Children also go missing. They run away and are also known to be trafficked for various exploitative purposes. Substance abuse among boys is very high. Compared to girls, boys have higher school dropouts; boys leave school to find work in the city. Children, especially girls, lack social capital and safe space for sharing; the institutions of education and families do not invest in building life skills among children; children lack reliable sources of information and age-appropriate knowledge access.

---

*“Schools do not talk about real issues that concern children and adolescents. Sex education and digital literacy do not feature in their curriculum. Parents and adults do not have the skills and vocabulary to impart this knowledge. Children, therefore, consume all that they get exposed to without a filter. This confuses and derails them” (Health Assistant, CHA, Patharpratima)*

---

In the face of these adversities, the following factors have been identified that have led to the lack of resilience among children and adolescents in the target geographies of the Sundarbans.

1. Limited understanding of climate change and its impact on their lives.
2. Lack of support and network within family and community.
3. Lack of access to children-friendly disaster management mechanisms in the community
4. Lack of bargaining power within households and other social spaces, including schools.
5. Prohibitive social and cultural norms leading to gender bias and inequality.

The project has placed emphasis on building psychosocial resilience among children at risk from climate change, given that they are the most affected and vulnerable group in the given context. Psychosocial resilience refers to the ability of children and adolescents to cope with and adapt to the psychological and social challenges posed by climate-related disasters and environmental changes. It involves developing

the skills, resources, and support networks necessary to maintain mental well-being and thrive in the face of adversity.

The project has identified sports as a tool and mechanism for empowering children and adolescents and building their resilience in coping with the detrimental effects of climate change and natural calamity. The project deliberately focuses on gender, whereby adolescent girls are kept at the center of the intervention. The ulterior goal is to challenge the existing gender and social norms that prohibit the development and advancement of girls and that reinforce gender roles and stereotypes. Kabaddi has been identified as the choice of sport for this intervention to bring about gender equality and social cohesion through resilience building. Apart from investing in sports for empowerment, the project has also focused on capacitating girls and adolescents on life skills. The following section will delve into the purpose and impact of these interventions with the analysis drawn from the evaluation.

## Current Status and Support Seeking Behaviour

The study focused on assessing the psychosocial landscape among children, leveraging the MHPSS toolkit of Tdh. In our analysis, we delved into both available support systems and the prevalence of adverse experiences in children. These findings shed light on the factors influencing children's resilience and well-being within their communities.

The study results indicate a modest availability of support systems for children, and children reported access to various forms of support when faced with challenges. Across the board, approximately 64% of

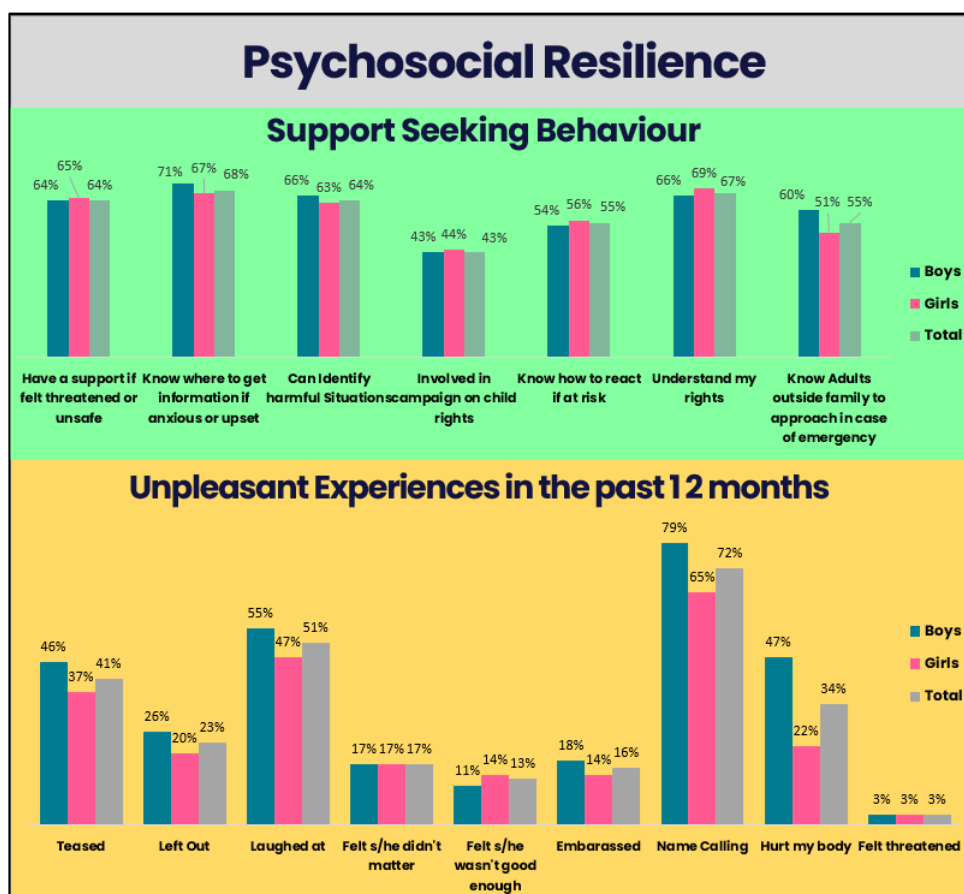


Figure 12: Psychosocial Resilience

their resourcefulness in accessing needed help. A significant gender gap was observed, with girls less likely to have such information.

children reported having a support system in place if they felt threatened or unsafe, indicating a foundational level of safety nets within their communities. Most of the time these support systems are in the form of sibling, parents, elders in the community. Children reach out to them when felt threatened. However, the current levels suggest the need for further improvements, especially in the context of prevalent migration and climate change. Additionally, nearly 68% of children reported knowing where to seek information when feeling anxious or upset, underscoring

Our analysis also revealed that 64% of children demonstrated the ability to identify harmful situations, reflecting a level of awareness and empowerment. This suggests that efforts to educate children on potential dangers and equip them with the skills to navigate such circumstances are required, with an incremental focus on girls. Encouragingly, a substantial proportion of children (43%) reported involvement in campaigns on child rights, indicating their active engagement in advocating for their well-being and rights within their communities.

A greater proportion of girls reported understanding their rights, though they were less likely to know anyone outside their family to approach in an emergency. In the context of the S4E project, it asserts programmatic relevance where the collectivization and social capital gains are expected to enhance their knowledge and support-seeking behaviour outside the households. Given the higher prevalence of underage marriage, restrictions on mobility, etc., an improvement in this area will aid in the improved psychosocial resilience of girls.

However, disparities were observed in certain aspects of support systems based on gender. While girls exhibited slightly higher rates of knowing where to seek information and understanding their rights, boys showed a marginally higher prevalence of having a support system if feeling threatened or unsafe and demonstrating the ability to identify harmful situations. These nuances highlight the importance of considering gender-specific needs and preferences when designing support programs for children.

Furthermore, while overall participation in support systems was modest but encouraging, there is room for improvement. Efforts to increase awareness and accessibility to support services, particularly among marginalized and vulnerable groups, remain essential for fostering a supportive environment conducive to children's well-being and development.

**Adverse Experiences:** Despite the presence of support systems, children continue to grapple with various adverse experiences that can have profound impacts on their psychosocial well-being. Our analysis revealed several prevalent challenges faced by children across both blocks. Overall, boys were more likely to be at the receiving end. It may also be a function of their enhanced mobility, greater engagement with peer groups, and better social capital. Teasing, exclusion, and verbal abuse were among the most commonly reported adverse experiences, with 41% of children indicating instances of teasing and 23% reporting feelings of being left out. Additionally, a significant proportion of children (51%) reported being laughed at, highlighting the prevalence of peer ridicule and its detrimental effects on children's self-esteem and social interactions. Furthermore, feelings of insignificance and inadequacy were reported by a notable proportion of children, with 17% indicating that they felt they didn't matter and 13% expressing feelings of inadequacy. These sentiments underscore the importance of fostering positive self-esteem and self-worth among children to mitigate the negative impacts of such experiences.

Disturbingly, instances of physical harm were reported by 34% of children, while 3% indicated feeling threatened. Reporting of physical violence was significantly high amongst boys, and almost half of them reported such an incidence in the past 12 months. These findings highlight the urgent need to address issues of violence and safety concerns faced by children, emphasizing the critical role of supportive and protective environments in safeguarding their well-being.

Overall, our analysis underscores the complex interplay between support systems and adverse experiences in shaping children's psychosocial resilience. While strides have been made in providing support services and raising awareness of children's rights, continued efforts are needed to address the underlying factors contributing to adverse experiences and to create environments that promote positive development and well-being for all children.

### 3.5. Participation in Sports

The project 'Kabaddi – Youth Empowerment through Sports' draws from the Sports for Empowerment methodology developed by Tdh in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF). The project uses Kabaddi to promote self-efficacy

and resilience in girls, assisting them to make better choices, especially around their personal safety, delaying marriages, and staying in school. In this way, the program tackles high rates of human trafficking, sexual abuse, and child marriage in the region.

The study took a detailed look into the mindset and practice of sports in the community. The project, with its focus on adolescent girls, intends to learn about the efficacy of Kabaddi as an entry point to building resilience among children in the disaster-affected region. Interaction with stakeholders suggests that sports among children and adolescents in general are encouraged by families, schools, and communities. Results from the quantitative survey showed that more than 90% of the households favored the participation of their children in sports. Furthermore, **the quantitative study reveals notable disparities in children's participation in sports based on gender and location.** Overall, 66% of boys and only 26% of girls reported playing sports *daily*. A significantly higher proportion of girls (42%) played sports *sometimes*, and about 19% of the girls *never or rarely* played a sport. A chi-square analysis revealed **statistically significant differences in frequencies and types of sports played by girls and boys. Girls played less, were less involved in physical and high-contact sports, and were less likely to play on open grounds.**

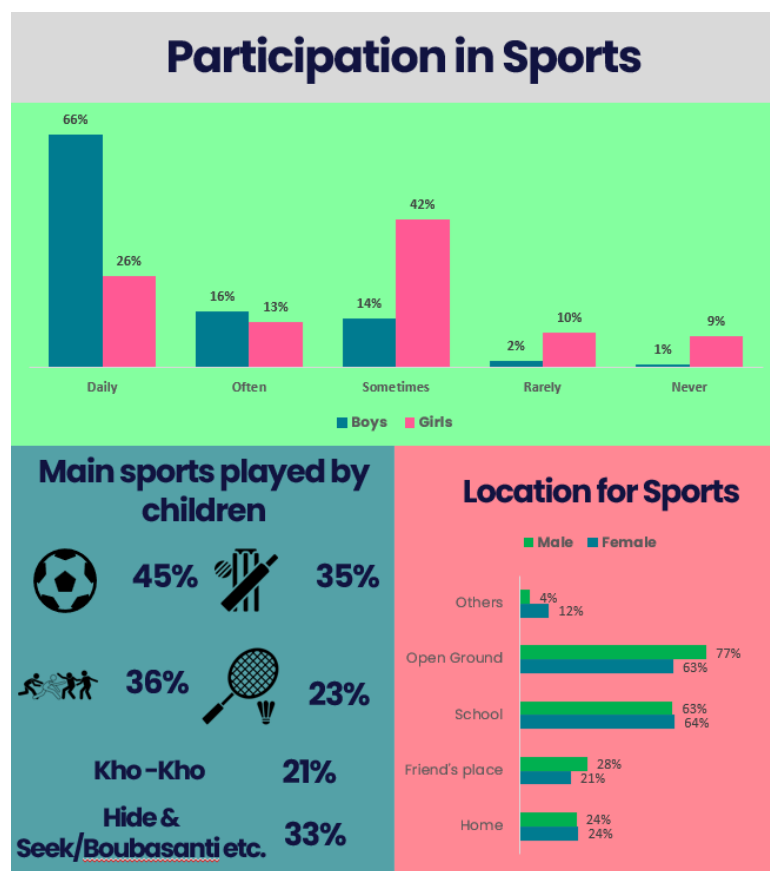


Figure 13: Sports Participation

Sports in the community are played in separate groups of boys and girls. Boys predominantly engage in cricket (71%) and football (84%), while girls exhibit diversity, with 53% playing Kabaddi, 24% playing Badminton, and 49% playing sports like Hide & Seek and Boubasanti. Only a smaller proportion of girls played sports such as Cricket (4%) and football (11%). Notably, only 7% of the children play Kabaddi in Gosaba, **highlighting the intervention's role in bringing girls to the playgrounds.**

Despite similar proportions of boys and girls playing sports at home and school, boys are more likely to play on open grounds (77%) compared to girls (63%). Factors such as lack of time (37%) and engagement in domestic chores (31%) significantly hinder children's (boys' as well as girls') sports participation, highlighting the need for interventions to address these barriers.

Girls face greater barriers in the form of social and gender norms. The quantitative survey also explored parents' perception towards sports,

especially by applying a gender lens. Even though 90% of the parents reported that girls should play sports but the duality of the response was more evident when probed. Only 25% of the parents could identify that not allowing girls to play was a harmful gender practice and only two-third of them encouraged boys to take part in household chores. The qualitative findings unpack such deep-seated gender-norms and barriers to participation in the sports. When Kabaddi was introduced in the community, there was initial resistance from

the girls themselves and their families. However, through the initial training and practice sessions, the girls learned to appreciate the sport and see its value in providing them with much-needed life skills.

---

*"I used to return home with scratches and marks on my knees. I did not like that. It seemed like a sport for boys." (Girl participant of the FGD in Patharpratima)*

*"I hail from a Muslim family. Wearing the jersey was not allowed from home. I was discouraged from playing Kabaddi because that would bring shame to the family." (Girl participant of the FGD in Patharpratima)*

---

## Barriers to participation in sports

The evaluation also enquired about the key barriers to sports participation by children. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, the study could identify the following barriers to participation in sports. While a few of them disproportionately burdened girls, there were a handful that affected boys and girls alike.

1. **Educational Priorities:** In contexts where education takes precedence, children prioritized academic commitments over sports participation, hindering their engagement in extracurricular activities like Kabaddi. Parents also push children to excel in their studies; sports remain a second priority for the parents. Lack of time was one of the most common reasons shared for non or limited participation in sports.
2. **Socio-cultural norms:** Initially, traditional gender norms and biases, coupled with societal stereotypes favouring male-dominated sports, posed resistance. Girls faced ridicule and scepticism when attempting to claim space for Kabaddi practice. However, this lessened as girls started practicing regularly, especially in Patharpratima. Time poverty was also a key barrier for girls. Girls were regularly engaged in household chores and had no or limited time for sports participation.
3. **Parental Concerns:** Mothers, in particular, expressed apprehension regarding their daughters wearing jerseys, fearing societal judgment and reputational harm. This apprehension led to covert practices, such as changing attire before and after practice sessions, to evade familial scrutiny. Initially, girls would rather find an alternate way out than give up on playing Kabaddi. But over time, the girls learned to deal with such conflicts, confront them with logic and win the support of the family members. Over time, with persistence and dialogue, they were successful. Another parental concern was injury during the game, as they feared that a serious injury could hamper their daughters' marriage prospects.
4. **Financial Constraints:** Despite Kabaddi's minimal resource requirements, concerns about purchasing jerseys and other associated costs deter families, particularly those facing financial strain.
5. **Limited Access to Space:** While Kabaddi requires minimal infrastructure, the dominance of male-centric sports, like cricket and football, led to unequal access to communal playing grounds. Girls encountered resistance when attempting to share these spaces. Boys would also make fun of Kabaddi as a sport and consider themselves superior to players of cricket or football. But over the months, with persistent efforts and seeking support from the local CBO and other community stakeholders, girls were able to claim equal space of the common ground. The Kabaddi Exhibition Match also brought popularity to this sport.

Despite these barriers, initiatives like facilitated practice sessions and educational discussions on pertinent topics have helped mitigate challenges, fostering confidence, social cohesion, and gender equality among participants. A response from one of the FGD participants in Patharpratima perfectly summed up what Kabaddi meant to the girls. She said, *“Kabaddi is a team sport. Before getting into the action, a lot of planning and strategy is required. Agility, flexibility, and stamina are a must. And to build that, one needs to practice regularly. The team helps in developing the strategy as per the raider’s competence and ability, and also as defenders, when being attacked. But when one is going out there as a raider, she is all alone trying to accomplish the task and coping with the wall of the opposition’s strong defense. The references in the game of Kabaddi are very similar to the real challenges that a girl faces in her everyday life. There are barriers and challenges that stem from family and society. To overcome those and to live a life of choice and independence, a girl must develop confidence, life skills, and the ability to push back. Kabaddi has taught me that and much more. It has taught me the importance of a support network, trust, the need for preparedness for emergencies, development skills like communication, the importance of being assertive and being supportive to others.”*

### **Acceptance, Trickle-down Effect and Emerging Benefits**

Study results in Patharpratima indicated that Kabaddi as a team sport is more accepted in rural setups. It does not require any accessories like football, badminton, or cricket; hence, it requires no expense. The area of field required to play Kabaddi is not too large. Any open space in the community can be utilized. The child respondents have reported that being an all-girls sport (as set up under the project), there is less resistance from the family. The girls look forward to the practice sessions. These become a good excuse for them to step out of home and mingle with others, which otherwise can bring residence from home. Through Kabaddi practice sessions, girls have been able to make friends with many others in the community. Children from different socio-economic-cultural groups are seen to mingle with each other in a game of Kabaddi without biases. Sports, therefore, need to be further promoted as a tool to bring about social cohesion in a diverse community.

---

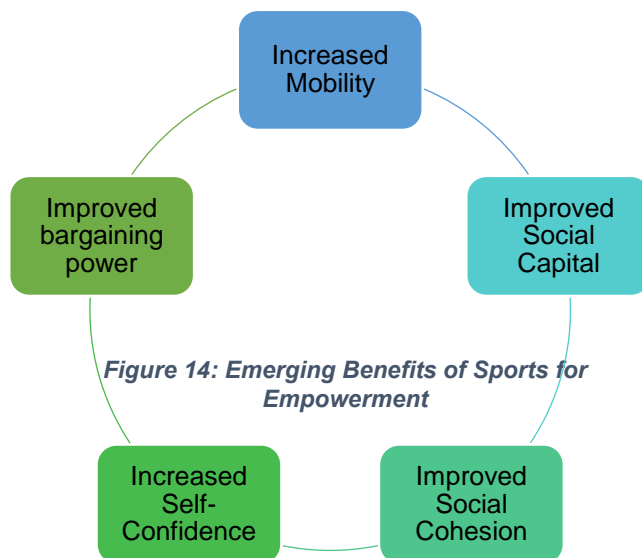
*‘I had migrated with my family for four years. Now I have come back to my village to complete my schooling. My parents are still away in the city. When I came back, I did not have any friends. They made fun of the way I spoke. In Delhi, I used to speak in Hindi. After I joined the children’s group and started engaging in various activities and Kabaddi, I could make friends again. I did not feel judged anymore.’ (Adolescent girl participant from Paschim Sridharpur, Patharpratima)*

---

An interview with the Upo-Pradhan of Digambarpur Gram Panchayat in Patharpratima brought to light that the local government strongly focuses on promoting sports for children and youth in the community. The official feels that sports are an effective way to improve the quality of life of children and youth of the community. The Gram Panchayat organizes sports events every year for a week. Early this year (in January 2024), a Kabaddi Exhibition Match was organized under Gram Panchayat Udyog during Netaji Swarno Jayanti (23-26 January). There was a lot of excitement in the community for the match. Going forward, as promised by the official, Kabaddi will be included in the intra-village sports and cultural event scheduled during the same time in January every year.

A team of girls from the region went to Kolkata for an exclusive Kabaddi tournament. 16 girls from the region traveled to Kolkata and played as Sundarban Warriors. Praajak organized and facilitated the event under the scope of this project. The local CBO engaged in detailed dialogue with the families of the participating





**Figure 14: Emerging Benefits of Sports for Empowerment**

girls and eventually acquired their permission. The exposure brought visibility and popularity to the girls, and their participation in this sport has found more recognition and acceptance in the family and the community. Girls who have been engaged in playing Kabaddi have been reported to have developed bargaining skills.

Sessions on topics concerning adolescent girls and boys follow Kabaddi's weekly facilitated practice sessions. The project has established separate groups of adolescent boys and girls in each village. Topics like Climate Change, Child Marriage, Gender, Child Safety, the POSH Act, Harassment, etc., are discussed in these sessions. Through these sessions, children and adolescents are able to gather information and knowledge on these topics. These sessions have been able to

create a safe space for the participants. They look forward to the interactions and the discussion. In the interview, not all children could recall the session's topics. **Since this intervention is at a nascent stage, the pre- and post-assessment of these sessions are yet to be measured to see the impact on knowledge, information, attitude, and skill.**

Overall, the sports for empowerment intervention has been able to build confidence among girls through participation in events and community recognition. The regularity of practice sessions adds to physical and mental well-being. The sport has established a support network among adolescent girls, fostering friendship and a sense of belonging. Through this engagement, the girls have been able to challenge some of the social and gender barriers at home and in the community. Participation in these activities has improved communication and dialogue between adolescents, their family members, and other adults. They feel more supported in their pursuits and aspirations. The inhibition in the interaction between adolescent boys and girls has also reduced, enabling normalized social behavior.

---

When I feel sad, I look forward to stepping out and playing. During the practice session, I forget all the problems at my personal front." (Girl participant in Patharpratima).

---

### Supriti, a simple village girl

Supriti Mondol lives with her father, mother, and one younger sister in a mud house near the river in Biswanathpur in Patarpratima. She is currently studying in class VIII. His father works as a wage labourer in betel vine and also works in farmlands. Her mother, with support from an NGO, has started organic farming, and the crops are sold either in the local market or to the NGO. *'I often feel sad as my father does not have a regular income, though he tries hard to provide proper food and education but our economic status restricts us,'* said Supriti. Despite economic constraints, Supriti values education, expressing a fondness for literature and Physical Science, along with a passion for dancing.

### Kabaddi, the game changer

*'My parents were apprehensive and never allowed us to go out alone because of frequent incidents of elopement,'* said Supriti, who joined the kabaddi sessions four months ago after continued persuasion by the NGO facilitator. Since the facilitator is a local lady, her parents agreed after several conversations. *'I had a strong wish to play any sports, and it was the cherry on the cake to receive other training along with kabaddi, such as how to speak with people without fear and child rights, which I have heard for the first time in my life'-* Supriti said with great joy. Initially, Supriti's mother was quite anxious about the future of her two daughters and was rigid about not allowing her girls to engage in any outside activities.

However, in the last four months, she has observed significant change within Supriti regarding discipline, communication, listening skills, and concentration in studies, which gained her trust in the Kabaddi program. Supriti's father also shared that though relatives and neighbors are trying to influence him not to allow her daughter to play sports, looking at the usefulness, he now prefers to ignore those suggestions and encourage Supriti to continue sports.

### Miles to go

*'I have a secret dream to share with you, which I have shared only with Didi (NGO facilitator). I want to join the Indian Army. Whenever I have access to my father's smartphone, I keep watching army training and related videos on YouTube,' - Supriti whispered with a dream in her eyes. She also mentioned that if she gets a job in the Army, she will no longer allow her father to work. She wants to support higher education for her younger sister and build a concrete house so they don't have to evacuate during floods and storms and take shelter in schools or flood centers. However, knowing her household's financial condition, Supriti sought validation: 'Will my situation allow my dream to come true, Didi!'*

## 3.6. Life Skills

In recent years, there's been a push to integrate life skills education into the school curriculum. The New Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the importance of developing skills like communication, resilience, creativity, and critical thinking. UNICEF defines "Life skills" as psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. By including life skills in education, schools help students develop problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills. This prepares them for life beyond academics, fostering holistic development and responsible citizenship. Integrating life skills education empowers adolescents to navigate life's challenges effectively and contribute positively to society.

The study applied UNICEF's Life Skill Measurement Tool (LSMT) among children and adolescents in South 24 Parganas, providing valuable insights into their psychosocial development. The tool assesses various



Figure 15: UNICEF's Life Skills Framework

life skills critical for navigating challenges and promoting resilience. Through a list of 36 questions, the tool analyses nine life skills spread across three domains, as presented in the exhibit below. Here, we present a comprehensive analysis of the results derived from the LSMT, focusing

## Results

The total LSMT scores ranged from 75 to 119, with a mean score of 104 across all participants. This indicates a relatively high level of life skill acquisition among the surveyed children and adolescents. The scores were consistent across different locations, genders, and age groups, suggesting a uniform distribution of life skills proficiency within the sample population. A higher standard deviation meant that the scores in the dataset were more spread out or varied from the mean.



Location/Average Score	Mean	Std. Dev.		Gender/Average Score	Mean	Std. Dev.
Patharpratima	103.5	7.7		Female	103.6	7.7
Gosaba	104.4	7.2		Male	104.4	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>104.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>104.0</b>	<b>7.5</b>

Percentages	Score Range	Total	Boys	Girls
Up to 59%	75-85	2%	1%	2%
Up to 66%	86-95	10%	9%	11%
UP to 73%	96-105	45%	42%	47%
UP to 80%	106-115	38%	42%	35%
More than 80%	115+	5%	6%	5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>292</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>156</b>

**Critical Thinking, Decision Making, and Problem Solving:** Critical thinking and decision-making skills are fundamental for problem-solving and effective decision-making. The average scores for critical thinking and decision-making were 11.3 and 12.2, respectively, out of a maximum of 16. These scores indicate a moderate level of proficiency in these areas among the participants. Notably, there were minimal variations in scores across different locations, genders, and age groups, indicating a consistent level of critical thinking and decision-making abilities within the sample. During qualitative research, the study found that many of the children and adolescents could think in depth and identify gender stereotype behaviors. One of them has given an example, saying, 'There are many people who are concerned about the marriage of their *girls* and may ask for support to manage the expenditure of girls marriage but till date never seen any parent asking for help to get their boys married.' Problem-solving skills are essential for overcoming challenges and finding innovative solutions. The average problem-solving score was 11.9 out of 16, reflecting a satisfactory level of proficiency among the participants. The qualitative research also echoed the findings on problem-solving. The children identified and articulated the key problems of their area, which included alcoholism, gender-based discrimination, changes in weather, and agricultural patterns. Many of them expressed that they have plans for joint actions to change the situation of child marriage and early pregnancy, closing down liquor shops in their localities; they also engage in dialogue with family members to offer space to children to share their opinions.

**Creativity, Participation, and Resilience:** Creativity yielded an average score of 11.3 out of 16, suggesting that children and adolescents possessed adequate life skills to navigate through situations and adapt to diverse situations. Active participation in various activities fostered social engagement and enhanced resilience. The average participation score was 11.9 out of 16, indicating a commendable level of engagement among the participants. Furthermore, resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, yielded an average score of 12.8 out of 16, reflecting a strong capacity for resilience among the surveyed children and adolescents. Qualitative inquiries revealed higher engagement of children in singing, painting, street plays, rallies, etc, which boosted their creative thinking. Similarly, participation in campaigns on child rights and early marriage was noted. The quantitative survey also highlighted the significant participation (43%) of children in such events.

---

*“Earlier, the remote control of my life was in another’s hand, but now I am aware of the rights and legal provisions, and I am now strong and confident enough to be able to stop my marriage and continue my college education” – FGD participant in Patharpratima*

---

**Negotiation, Empathy, and Communication:** In the areas of negotiation and empathy, children scored 11.4 and 12.6, respectively; however, scores in communication were low (9). This further highlighted the need to work on the communication skills of the children in the target geography. Age and gender were influencing factors for the Negotiation score. Girls scored slightly lower on the negotiation and with increasing age, children had improved negotiation scores. No location, gender, or age differences were observed for Empathy and Communication scores.

**Gender and Age Disparities:** While overall scores were consistent across genders and age groups, subtle variations were observed. Females exhibited slightly higher scores in critical thinking, decision-making, and empathy, indicating a nuanced gender difference in certain life skills. Similarly, older participants demonstrated slightly higher scores in creativity and negotiation, suggesting a potential developmental progression in these skills with age.

The LSMT results provided valuable insights into the life skills of children and adolescents. Overall, participants demonstrated a commendable level of proficiency across various domains, indicating a strong foundation for navigating challenges and promoting resilience. Also, these findings underscored the importance of continued efforts to foster the development of life skills among children and adolescents, ensuring their holistic growth and well-being.

During the FGD with adolescent boys in Pashchim Sridharpur village of Patharpratima in the Sundarbans region, the interaction turned engaging and lively. The children seemed happy and openly shared their experiences being a part of the group, their likes and dislikes, and their aspirations. Despite the fact that the gathering was rather large, with 22 boys and 1 girl participating in the FGD, every child contributed to the sharing. The children demonstrated confidence and clarity of thought in sharing issues that concern them, and were articulate.

The children unanimously shared that climate change impacts their lives, and all others in the community. The occurrence of heavy storms has increased, and the heavy rains lead to flooding. The temperature during the summer has increased. As a result of the cyclones and storms, the trees are uprooted, houses built of straw and mud are damaged, and the electric poles are broken. During the floods, the roads, houses, and farmland remain submerged under water for days. Communication and connectivity are hampered. Schools shut down. The children have reported that over the years, they have noticed families, couples, and men/male youth leave the village to the cities for work. They feel that the climatic conditions make it difficult for families to stay and earn money. Every household of the participating boys is reported to have a migrant member.

When asked if any of the children have seen any young girls from the community go missing, or travel out of the village without the family accompanying, a few of the respondents replied in the affirmation. Right in the midst of this discussion, one of the boys in the group broke down with tears. He hid his face between his knees and cried incessantly. Without being prompted, most of the boys left the room, while four remained to hold the boy in a collective embrace. One of them brought him a glass of water, and the other three took him to a corner to offer consolation. The only girl of the group spoke to him in a low tone until the boy lifted his head and drank the water. The adults in the room, including the evaluator and the staff from the local CBO, distanced themselves from the situation and allowed the children to respond. It took 15 minutes for the boy to gain composure and come back to his seat. The rest of the participants were quietly brought in. The boy, unprovoked, narrated his story.

*“My cousin ran away from home a year ago. I was very close to her. We lived together in a joint family. She was barely 15 years old and fell in love with a boy in our village. I remember her being on the phone all the time. There was conflict in the house because of her addiction to the phone and her association with the boy. My uncle was planning to get her married off to someone else. Suddenly one day, she just disappeared, and never came back. She has not contacted anyone at home. We don’t even know where she is, or if she is even alive. My family is still very angry with her. They say that she has brought shame and humiliation to the family. I miss her, and I am concerned about her wellbeing.”*

This incident brought out very crucial impacts that the program has been able to achieve. The boy could only share his story because it was a safe space for him. He trusted his vulnerability and emotion with his peers and did not fear being judged. Most importantly, the boy did not judge his sister for her actions but instead expressed concern for her. Children missing from the village, especially girls, is a complex issue that is intertwined with a whole lot of speculations and moral judgment leading to stigma. This incident demonstrated the pronounced impact of the program on the improved empathy of the children participating in this intervention.

### 3.7. Gender Issues and Induced Changes

The barriers experienced by the girls and women in the target geography cut across the intersectionality of caste, religion, ethnicity, location, age, and regional identity. These barriers greatly influence and impact their access to emergency response services and gender-based social practices that directly impact outcomes for women and girls in terms of agency, decision-making, safety, and well-being. Child marriage, trafficking in girls, and exploitation of girls and women are reported to be prevalent in the target geographies of the intervention. The Sundarban districts have become a hub for human trafficking, child marriage, and violence against women. Girls in these districts are often forced into marriage and prostitution.<sup>13</sup> These girls usually end up in situations of domestic violence or brothels. This section, therefore, focuses explicitly on the gender differentiators of exclusion in the context of the project sites.

To begin with, the project has designed and implemented interventions that prioritized adolescent girls. The project has promoted gender equality and empowerment by mainstreaming girls' participation through collectivization and strengthening capacity. During the project, certain shifts towards gender equality were recorded. It includes enhancing girls' social capital, increasing bargaining power within the communities and households, gaining a voice, increasing mobility, and improving awareness of the risks related to climate change-induced vulnerabilities. Girls have become aware of the importance of education. The involvement of youth (both male and female) and other community stakeholders has helped endorse this.

The gender gap is a stark reality in the target areas, and the project can bridge these gender gaps in the intervention geography by adopting gender intentionality in its design, measurement, and implementation approaches.

---

*"I can see my parents stressed and anxious all the time because they need to save money for my marriage. That is a major discussion at home. My brother is just two years younger. My parents allow him all the freedom to roam around freely and mingle with friends. There is no expectation from him. On the other hand, I feel restricted. I feel like a burden all the time, and I also feel that I have been raised only to be married off." (Adolescent girl from Gosaba)*

---

The project has immense potential in capturing insights through a Gender Gap Analysis and integrating robust gender indicators in Monitoring and Evaluation to capture shifts at the system's levels, i.e., social norms, power dynamics, reduction in gender-based violence, and policy influencing. During this evaluation exercise, in-depth interaction with adolescent girls' groups, youth leaders, and key stakeholders across the target communities of the project revealed some critical gender gaps and barriers. These gaps are present in the table below; the program can further strategize to address these gaps through gender-intentional programming in the future:

#### Existing Gender Gaps

Prohibitive Gender Roles leading to school drop of Children

---

<sup>13</sup> Situational reference taken from the proposal document of Kabaddi - Youth Empowerment through Sport in West Bengal

- School dropout among children, for both girls and boys, was reported to be high in the target villages. While boys engaged in various economic activities contributing to the family income, girls got involved in household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for siblings or sick family members. Child marriage is prevalent. These instances interfered with children's ability to attend school regularly. Also, they propelled the onset of gender division of labour from the stage of adolescence that restricted the development of both girls and boys.

### **Prohibitive Gender Roles Impacting Women's Wellbeing**

- The level of education is very low among women in the Sundarbans areas. Women bear a disproportionate burden of household chores, including cooking, cleaning, childcare, and caring for elderly or sick family members. They take on the primary caregiving roles for children, elderly relatives, and family members with disabilities or chronic illnesses. Almost all women juggle multiple roles, including paid employment, unpaid work on agricultural farms, and domestic responsibilities. Saline water intrusion contaminates water bodies and ultimately makes women travel more to collect fresh water. The burden of work and continuous engagement in multiple activities throughout the day, at home and outside, leaves women exhausted and impacts their overall development, empowerment, and well-being. Adolescent girls support their mothers in domestic and care responsibilities. This established gender enculturation, where gender roles are passed through generations,

### **Prohibitive Social Norms Leading to Discrimination**

- There are existing prohibitive gender norms related to menstruation. Menstruation is still surrounded by stigma, and open discussions about it are discouraged and considered inappropriate. This has resulted in a culture of silence, making it difficult for women and adolescent girls to seek information about menstrual hygiene or reproductive health. Conversations between mother and daughter about menstrual hygiene and practices are not ordinary. Most girls grow up unaware of their bodily changes and what to expect at the outset of menstruation. This leaves them with acute discomfort and confusion when they enter puberty. Sanitary napkins are not common among older women in the community. Hence, the practice of using sanitary napkins is not socially handed down to adolescent girls.

Once menstruation sets in, girls are discouraged from mingling with boys. It is looked down upon and creates conflict in the house. This creates a distance between girls and boys starting from the adolescent phase. Gender roles also tend to become more stringent for girls who enter adolescence.

Interaction with girls through the FGDs has brought out that there is a strong preference for boy children in families, which cuts across all social, cultural, religious, and ethnic communities. The birth of a girl child is never celebrated, whereas celebratory rituals associated with a boy continue through his childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Bias towards boys is seen in education, food distribution at home, assets and distribution, and opportunities. Girls are seen as burdens to the family, and parents worry about the various costs associated with having a girl child, e.g., dowry (as a social obligation) and obligatory rituals even after the daughter is married off and conceives a child. This poses an economic burden on the family of the girls, adding to the aversion to having a girl child. The woman is subjected to familial and societal humiliation and abuse if there is the birth of only girls in the wedlock. Not having a boy child is also considered the mother's fault and detrimental to the prosperity of the family and household. Boys and men carry pivotal roles in significant rituals regarded as auspicious. Hence, due to longing for a boy, many couples attempt several pregnancies until a boy is born. This seriously affects the health of the woman and pushes the family into the fringes of economic stress and poverty.

### **Gender Discrimination in Sports Participation**

- Girls are expected to conform to gender norms in conduct, behaviour and attire. Playing Kabaddi is considered 'un-ladylike.' The family discourages girls from playing Kabaddi because of the scars from the sport. Adolescent girls are groomed for the eventuality of a suitable marriage, and these scars are believed to compromise the notion of beauty, potentially jeopardizing a befitting prospect.

Adolescent girls are also discouraged from wearing the jersey, which typically consists of shorts and a t-shirt. The jersey is also perceived to expose the body of the girls, which is gender-inappropriate. Participating in sports keeps the girls out of home, which is discouraged from home. Mobility for girls is still restricted and controlled.

### **Gender-based Violence**

- Violence against women is high in the Sundarbans. The respondents have reported that there is a huge problem of alcoholism among men in the target communities. This has been related to the incidences of conflicts within the family, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence. However, cases are hardly reported. The attitude towards domestic violence is a socialized behaviour in the target community. It is common and rampant, yet the community prefers to deal with it privately, to the extent of accepting it. The child respondents have reported that domestic violence at home severely affects them. It leads to stress and anxiety, and they harbour thoughts of running away.
- Trafficking in girls is high in the Sundarbans region. There is ample reporting on the prevalence of the same, which has also been corroborated in the stakeholder interviews. Children are trafficked for various exploitative purposes – prostitution, child marriage, domestic work, and child labour. In most cases, trafficking is facilitated by a known person from within the family or the community. There is an NGO-run shelter home in the district that provides care and protection services to children rescued from trafficking. However, the impact of trafficking on the survivor is irreversible, which often poses a challenge to psycho-social rehabilitation: the trauma infiltrates into her functional life, leads to school dropout, there is a stigma associated with being trafficked and missing, etc.
- The situation of poverty, lack of livelihoods, economic shocks, and split of families because of migration exposes children, especially girls, to vulnerabilities. Adolescent girls are reported to elope with their lovers and get married. She often returns pregnant, which exposes her and the conceived child to health risks. Underage marriage is considered null and void, and the girl is exposed to stigma and shame. The respondents have reported that, in some instances, the girl is abandoned by her lover.

### **Feminisation of Agriculture**

- Women do lack ownership of land and land rights. With the large-scale migration of the male members of the households, women are engaged in agricultural farming and fishing. This has led to feminization in agriculture in the Sundarbans area. Despite women's increased role in agriculture and livelihoods, women remain at a disadvantage with no land rights, limited mobility, lack of decision-making power, and access to market and finances as farmers. Climate-change-induced calamities and adversities have made it even more difficult for women: with water scarcity, women and girls bear the primary burden of finding water for various purposes, adding to their time poverty and drudgery.

### **Unintended reinforcement of prohibitive Gender Roles**

- The project specifically collectivizes and builds the capacity of adolescent girls by constituting and training an all-girls Kabaddi team, followed up with module-wise capacity development sessions with these girls. An exclusive group of adolescent boys who have undergone the same training is also seen to be formed under the project. Having separate interventions with girls may initially facilitate a safe space for girls to participate uninhibitedly and also endorse family/community support; yet, there remains a risk of excluding the boys and LGBTQ+ communities and potentially reinforcing the gender divide between them. Engagement of boys, males (youth), and LGBTQI+ communities in girl's programs must be integrated at all tiers to challenge the larger systemic barriers toward reducing the gender gap.



# Chapter 2 – Youth Leaders in Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri





## 4.1. Programmatic Impact and Sustainability

### 4.1.1. Impact and Sustainability of Kabaddi for Empowerment

The Kabaddi for Empowerment project in West Bengal has demonstrated significant positive impacts on the cognitive, psycho-social, and gender empowerment aspects among children and youth in the target communities. Through extensive interactions with various stakeholders, it has been reaffirmed that Kabaddi, as a high-contact sport, fosters improved cognitive skills, teamwork, and self-confidence, especially amidst the prevalent disruption caused by mobile phones in the lives of young people.

Greater emphasis is given to the psycho-social benefits of this sport, given the situational complexity that these children and youth are faced with in their daily lives. The penetration of mobile phones in the hands of these young people has created disruption in their lives. The increased screen time has greatly impacted their physical activities and in-person interaction with peers and family members. Mobile phones are reported to occupy children/youth's free time and keep them away from playing different sports and chasing creative pursuits.

While high-contact and team sports, like Kabaddi, were primarily associated with boys and men, the training and exposure to the sport benefit all. The youth respondents themselves have reported that Kabaddi helps inculcate the core values of fair play, non-discrimination, and teamwork. Exposure to these attributes adds great value to boys and girls alike. The project has deliberately mobilised adolescent girls to play Kabaddi and formed an all-girls Kabaddi team to participate in events and tournaments. Girls were brought together at least once a week over practice sessions, which were followed by structured life skills training and discussion workshops on various topics that concern adolescents and youth. The project also formed separate groups of adolescent boys and engaged them through issue-based modular training workshops. As a current practice, the older alumni of the youth leaders have taken on a proactive role in reaching out to many other children and youth in their communities and beyond to engage them in Kabaddi and life skills sessions. These youth leaders are now recognised as lead facilitators of these sessions. The youth leaders who are still engaged in these efforts, contribute a couple of days every week for about four hours in facilitating these sessions and in mobilising the community. They also seek the support of Praajak staff in identifying a new geography and approaching a new community. At this stage, the youth leaders, along with Praajak staff, approach the local Counsellor to discuss the interventions and seek their advice. They conduct a recce of the community that they intend to enter and assess the availability of a playground and safe space for the sport and the weekly life skills sessions. They interact with local clubs and mother's groups to discuss the intervention and establish their support and buy-in before engaging with the children. **Over the course of the project, the intervention has been seen to challenge some prohibitive social norms and bring about gender equality in the lives of adolescents in the target communities. Group formation was deemed effective as the project team engaged with community leaders and members, leveraging existing social capital. Group dynamics were vibrant, with members demonstrating a strong sense of association and solidarity.**

At the outset of the project, the participation of women and girls in physical sports was practically nil. The respondents reported that initially, there was resistance from the family to allow the girls to participate in the sport and the project. Some of the challenges to participating in the program, highlighted by the respondents, are as follows:

- Not allowed to stay outside for the practice sessions.
- Not allowed to wear the jersey. It was deemed vulgar and gender inappropriate.
- Evoked suspicion at home around mingling with boys on the excuse of participating in the program.
- The scars from the sport brought concern to mothers on the ground that it would leave permanent blemishes.
- Kabaddi was considered a sport for boys, not befitting the soft and fragile constitution of a girl.

- The playgrounds were occupied by boys in the community. They did not offer space for the girls to play Kabaddi.

The project team facilitated dialogues with the households and other community members to establish their buy-in. The intent, purpose, and activities of the project were discussed and shared with all stakeholders. This helped establish trust and transparency and eventually endorsed family support. With time, girls became actively involved in sports. The female respondents expressed feeling more confident, supported, and joyful. They have learned how to function as a team, and the engagement has enhanced their efficiency in handling diverse, challenging situations through problem-solving and strategic thinking.

*'The Kabaddi sessions are a liberating experience for me. Kabaddi has created an opportunity for many of us to go out from home twice a week, enjoy the open sky above, and feel the sensation of lush green grass under our feet.'* (Youth Leader from Murshidabad)

With the available data, the evaluators also conducted a barrier and enabler analysis, and the results from that exercise are presented below:

#### Enablers

- Community Engagement and Dialogue
- Structured Training and Life Skills Workshops
- Formation of Gender-specific groups worked as entry point; but can have unintended impact

#### Barriers

- Limited access to playing grounds
- Scar Concerns and Physical Safety

The project has successfully integrated Kabaddi (sports) as an enabler towards community participation in addressing issues related to gender-based violence and prohibitive social norms. However, with the youth leaders emerging as the flag bearers of the cause, they are seen to be faced with hindrances in seamlessly taking the work forward in their communities. Some of the operational challenges are highlighted below:

With Praajak (the local implementing organisation) withdrawing from the daily operations on the field, the youth leaders are faced with challenges in accessing new areas. Despite the efforts made by the youth leaders in facilitating community dialogue in introducing Kabaddi as an enabling sport for girls, acceptance in new areas has been a major challenge. The social barriers for girls remain high, especially among communities where such developmental interventions are absent. Hence, creating new groups with local children and young adults without support from Praajak is a critical challenge. This exercise takes a lot of bandwidth, time investment and requires resources. For the program to impact larger communities, the intervention must train, nurture and retain community mobilisers. The youth leaders are ideal candidates for the purpose; however, they need further and more strategic handholding to take on this role. Collaborating with other locally present CBOs can also be considered to leverage their established relationship and trust with the communities.

---

*The presence of a Praajak facilitator in a new locale expedites community acceptance, making the commencement of our interventions far more effective and faster compared to our independent endeavours in unfamiliar communities when introducing Kabaddi."* (Youth Leader from Malda)

---

---

*"The tournaments orchestrated by Praajak have generated impetus and instilled a sense of pride among children and the community, thereby smoothing the path. However, as youth leaders, we find ourselves unable to sustain such events without financial backing." (Youth Leader from Malda)*

---

#### **4.1.2. Impact at the individual level**

**Awareness and Self-confidence:** The qualitative study shows a significant effect of the project intervention on self-esteem, self-perception, effective communication, social acceptance, athletic competence, and leadership skills. Considering the program's maturity, there is a substantial degree of change at the level of communication, self-awareness, negotiation, and analytical skills. The way the youth leaders at Malda shared their views during group discussions was rather impressive. While elucidating on the rights of the child, they were able to cite references from legal provisions (POCSO) and available government schemes and services (JJ Act) and could make an analysis of the existing gap between the provisions and enforcement.

---

*'I used to be restless and angry with my parents as they constantly tried to control my movement. There were fights at home, and I would rebel to find my way out. It angered me even more when I saw that there were no restrictions imposed on my brothers. With the exposure gained through the project, I now understand that my family's reaction stems from their concern for me and my safety. I realized that I, too, have to be responsible, conscious of the realities, and reasonable in my actions. I channeled my anger and restlessness into strategic action towards sensitizing the community on issues related to the safety of girls. Gradually, I also gained the trust of my family, who perceived me as a responsible person and said that I would not do anything to compromise my safety and wellbeing.'* (A girl respondent from Malda)

---

The project has played a significant role in increasing youth and adolescents' awareness, knowledge, and information on key issues that concern them. Some of the key issues identified by the youth leader are Child Marriage, Climate Change, Migration, Child Rights, Youth Development, Government Schemes, Gender and Violence against Women and Children, and the Importance of Sports. The subsequent initiatives taken by children and youth leaders to monitor and address instances of child marriages, eve-teasing, and other forms of exploitation of children in their respective areas highlight the project's success in empowering youth to become catalysts for social change within their communities. The youth leaders and children of Malda and Patharpratima, respectively, strongly expressed their concern regarding alcoholism among male members of the family. They have quoted that alcoholism is linked to conflicts at home, domestic violence, and physical violence in children. The situation creates acute stress and anxiety for children and adolescents. The youth leaders nurtured under the project have reported that the project has created a safe space for them to discuss such sensitive and personal issues in group meetings. The strength drawn from the collective solidarity has equipped young people to negotiate conflict situations at home. Youth leaders have also made plans for joint action to address child marriage and early pregnancy that is prevalent in their community and take action towards closing down liquor shops in their localities. Evaluation findings suggest that the project has a profound impact on the self-confidence of children, adolescent girls, and youth. They have gained voice, are confident in public speaking, and can articulate their thoughts fluently, without any fear, especially in front of any figure of authority. Youth and adolescents are now able to engage in dialogue with family members and claim their space as young and responsible actors to share their opinions and participate in decision-making.

Despite the implementation of a robust capacity development intervention with children and youth leaders in the community, the project did not embed the scope for continued learning and application of the skills and competence gained. The project focused heavily on value-based learning, through sports and guided sessions. However, the impact of these issue-based and value-based sessions was not quite captured through structured pre-and post-training assessments, leaving most of the impact inferences anecdotal and open to unsubstantiated interpretations of change in skill, competence, knowledge and attitude. The program can strengthen this aspect in the future.

Youth leaders find themselves grappling with challenges in retaining knowledge despite completing all sessions facilitated by Praajak on soft skills, gender, rights, and legal provisions. They acknowledge the necessity of periodic refresher training to maintain proficiency in the topics and concepts. The project also developed youth leaders as facilitators to cascade these sessions with other children of the community. The refresher course will further boost the confidence of these youth leaders as training experts and will position them as competent resource persons for various training organised by the local government and other local organisations. Given that these youth and children come from marginalised communities with limited resources, it is a challenge for them to continue to extend capacity development initiatives. The project had scope to enhance the capacity of the youth and children through developing proposals, identifying and mobilising local resources to support their initiative, and following a concrete plan of action.

**Roles and Identities:** The interaction with the youth leaders demonstrated their increased level of confidence, motivation, and sense of purpose in influencing the community toward sustainable and transformative change in the lives of children, youth, and the community at large. In Malda alone, 60 youth leaders have been trained and mentored and are now actively nurturing a second line of youth leaders. The rippling effect of the program has generated much interest among many others, especially youth and children, in the same community. Parents are more accepting of letting their girls engage in such activities. New groups are being formed, and the life skills sessions draw ample footfall and interest. The senior youth leaders spend two days a week reaching out to more children in the community and engaging in dialogue with families, government officials, and other community stakeholders. They are now well-conversed with the route to influence and understand the need for community buy-in and the importance of convergence in creating a safe and conducive environment for children and youth.

---

*"We have experienced the immense benefit of kabaddi and other life skills sessions. These have been enablers in instilling confidence and motivation in us. As young citizens, we feel responsible and obligated to contribute to the society. I feel that the skills and knowledge that I have gained must be transferred to other children of the community so that the change can be seen at the societal level rather than be confined only at the individual level". (Youth leader from Malda)*

---

Youth leaders could also openly discuss their needs, desires, and aspirations. They reported that they have learned to prioritize their activities and pursuits through the program. Most of them have a clearer perception of their future plans. Transitioning into and engaging in leadership roles has been personally fulfilling for young people, allowing them to discover their passions, strengths, and potential. They see themselves as positive role models for their peers and younger community members. Some of the changes they see in themselves as youth leaders are quoted as follows:

- They feel an increased sense of belongingness to their community, peers, and families.
- They feel strongly driven towards contributing to society and their immediate community.
- As facilitators themselves, youth leaders are more committed and serious about learning and

acquiring knowledge and information on issues that concern children, adolescent girls, and other vulnerable groups in the community. *"I need to learn first before transferring information and knowledge to others."* (Youth leader in Behrampur)

- They can convince families and community members to support the participation of adolescent girls in sports like Kabaddi.
- They are sought as counselors and advisors by other children in the community, and they are role models for them.
- They are able to collaborate and partner with various government officials through dialogue and various community-led programs and seek support on issues that concern children, youth, and other vulnerable communities.
- They feel confident driving awareness campaigns and community actions, challenging injustice, and advocating for practices that promote equity, justice, and environmental protection.
- As a collective, the youth leaders have established safe, inclusive, progressive, and enabling social capital in the community, fostering a support network and solidarity among members.

---

*"Whenever I see children waiting with broad smiles for me to start the session, I feel so fulfilled in my role as a leader and facilitator. The parents of these children treat me with respect and appreciate the value I am said to add to the lives of their children. This makes me even more motivated and energized to take the work forward."* (Youth leader from Malda)

---

With the increased engagement of youth leaders and of the children of the community in sports and other collective engagements, there are subtle concerns that have emerged from among the families. The transference of roles and responsibilities to the youth leaders, with the withdrawal of the project from the field, has increased their time investment to the continued activities, e.g., community mobilisation, undertaking training, pursuing addressing of community issues, acting as vigilante groups to arrest child marriage and trafficking of children, etc. This is said to potentially deflect the focus of youth from pursuing higher education and acquiring professional skills. Many of the youth leaders have found their calling and purpose in pursuing a career in social development work, in a continuum with the work that they have embarked on as youth leaders in a volunteering capacity. However, being groomed under the project and with the minimum incentives provided to them as travel allowances, there is a tacit expectation among the youth leaders to find a concrete entry point and referencing by the local implementing partner to help in the actualisation of their career aspiration as staff of the local CBO. This could potentially lead to an unintended expectation from the target audience of the project and requires sensitive handling and setting realistic expectations on the part of the facilitating implementation organisation.

---

*"At times, my parents advocate for investing my time in academic pursuits or exploring future livelihood prospects, given our economic circumstances, where earning and settling down in life are non-negotiable priorities. We scarcely have the luxury to squander time. So, I am often torn between pursuing my passion as a Youth Leader and building my career. Ideally I want my passion to be my career."* (Youth leader from Malda)

---

**Social Connections** – Based on interaction with respondents and stakeholders, it has been concluded that

the project has been able to foster collaboration and dialogue by creating opportunities for young people to work alongside adults, community leaders, and local government offices. This active involvement not only amplified the voices of marginalized communities but also fostered a sense of ownership and accountability within local governance. The youth leaders take pride in the fact that their opinions are now valued within the family and in the community. Girls are able to articulate their interest and drive to complete schooling and pursue higher education. They are able to negotiate with their family members to support them in their aspirations rather than focus on their marriage. Youth leaders, both girls and boys, have challenged gender-discriminatory practices at home.

---

*"I love dancing. Whenever I danced during festivals, people in my extended family used to laugh at me, saying that I come across as effeminate. My engagement with this program has given me a community of peers and supporters. I am more comfortable in my skin now. My immediate family has also embraced, to a large extent, that my interests are different from the gender norm. Last year I performed a fusion classical dance recital on stage, with other girls in the troupe. I received much accolades. My skill and interest in drawing 'alponas' is also appreciated in the family. For every 'pujo' now I have taken over the task of drawing alponas from the women of the household, who have been traditionally drawing these folk-style painting on the floor." (Male Youth Leader from Murshidabad)*

---

As leaders and change agents, the youth have taken initiatives in stopping child marriages and advocating against eve teasing in the community. The youth leaders have also collaborated with the local Counsellor and District Magistrate to address other pressing local issues like access to safe drinking water, installing street lights, improving sanitation conditions, and improving road conditions. Youth leaders highlighted that their association and rapport with various stakeholders like Police, Panchayat, ICDS, ASHA workers, and VLCPC have strengthened the network of collaborators in bringing about positive changes in the community.

Many youths have expressed their interest in social work and opting for the same as a choice of career. As established and recognized youth leaders, they are seen as role models. They are, therefore, keen to continue their efforts and invest in creating a second line of leadership that motivates more children to participate in active citizenship. Furthermore, the project's support in the access to essential public spaces, such as community spaces and playgrounds, represented a critical step towards fostering social inclusion and cohesion. By creating spaces for interaction and collaboration, the project has not only expanded opportunities for sports activities but also facilitated avenues for community mobilization and collective action.

**Overall, these evaluation findings demonstrate the project's impact in empowering marginalized communities through youth leadership and child participation, fostering their active participation in local governance processes. By addressing systemic barriers and fostering a culture of inclusion and accountability, the project has laid a foundation for sustainable social development and positive community transformation.** With the project being phased out, the direct field support has been withdrawn. However, the implementing organization remains steadfast in its commitment to nurturing the growth of these budding leaders and extending mentorship to them, but in an informal capacity. The project lacked a strong exit strategy, linking the youth leaders to continued capacity developing, access to resources, guidance, and structured mentorship to navigate the challenges inherent in their expected roles. The project has also lacked in providing clarity in setting expectations among youth leaders in terms of their roles, ambit and mechanism of influence, and as champions in challenging gender and power dynamics across intersectionality through engagement in sports. The path to addressing crucial social issues like child marriage, gender-based discrimination, and unsafe migration seemed a bit confusing. The project should have focused more on promoting Kabaddi and leaving the legacy of its continuance with all stakeholders of the project. However, the design of this intervention excluded boys, male youth, and other gender groups from actively engaging



in Kabaddi in demonstrating resilience, resourcefulness, and collaboration. The project needed to recognize the need to engage boys and men in equal partnerships and participation with girls through friendly co-ed matches. Kabaddi, as a sport, has the scope for enforcing and promoting positive masculinities by building boys' life skills around inclusive communication, expressing emotions, and resolving conflicts peacefully.

#### 4.1.3. Impact at the community level

**Reducing gender barriers in society:** The qualitative data reveals that participation in sport is a social and cultural process in which gender construct plays a key role. It has been reiterated by various respondents that for girls to engage in high-contact sports like Kabaddi is considered inappropriate. Girls who do play such sports may be perceived as non-feminine. In the early years, girl children are able to engage in sports without extreme resistance from home. Once menstruation sets in, girls are discouraged from stepping out of home, playing outdoor sports, and mingling with boys. These are looked down upon and create situations of conflict at home. The differences between girls and boys start seeping in from the adolescent phase. Gender roles also tend to become more stringent for girls who enter adolescence. The project's deliberate focus on adolescent girls is apt and relevant in the context of addressing social norms and gender barriers.

As raised by the youth leaders of Malda, the lack of safe and appropriate sports facilities and playing grounds adds to the hindrances for girls in participating in sports. The locally available playgrounds are essentially occupied by boys, leaving no space for girls to play. Even if girls gather in a common area to play, they are subjected to eve-teasing and the sexiest comments from other men. This discourages girls from stepping out of their homes and engaging in sporting activities. There is also a lack of local female role models, including women coaches.

The project has successfully overcome certain barriers to girls' participation in sports and other community engagements. The first barrier to overcome was with the self.

---

*"I was told that girls don't play Kabaddi and that there were other things set out for me. I should focus on cooking and other skills that are meant for girls/women, like stitching. Those were the choices that were meant for me and appropriate for me. I didn't believe it. I knew there was something special waiting for me. And tried to luck in Kabaddi. And everything changed." (A Kabaddi player and adolescent girl in Siliguri)*

---

Being engaged in the program allowed the girls to step out of their homes and find a safe space to be heard and understood. All-female Kabaddi group has been able to create space for empowerment and belonging for the girls. Initially, trying out a new activity, like Kabaddi, seemed intimidating. However, regular practice and self-belief gave the girls the opportunity to support one another in learning a new sport. **As a collective, the girls have been able to reject stereotypes of feminine identity, embracing a new definition of what it means to be a woman with the attributes of being a sportswoman.**

The project invested substantially in creating buy-in and endorsing family support toward girls' participation in sports and other community engagements. The project team engaged in household dialogue, created awareness camps, and discussed the purpose and activities of the interventions with families. The project team also collaborated with various community stakeholders and influencers, engaging with them as partners and key stakeholders in the intervention. This helped gather community trust and establish transparency. The convergence translated into increased support from family and community members for adolescent girls to play Kabaddi. The all-girls Kabaddi team from the region was also groomed to participate in various intra-district and inter-state tournaments and exhibition matches. The all-girls team winning Kabaddi tournaments and bringing back medals changed things for the better. The victory brought recognition and accolades to the Kabaddi-playing girls in the community.

---

*“My parents are very proud of me now. They talk about my success to everyone in the family and neighborhood. They have seemingly become ambassadors of the sport, encouraging neighbours to send their girls to play Kabaddi under my guidance. They even call out people who criticize girls playing for Kabaddi.” (Adolescent girl, Kabaddi player, in Murshidabad)*

---

In Behrampur, the project successfully included members of the LGBTQI+ community in the program. They actively participate in the group sessions and bring up unique and diverse perspectives of the challenges, barriers, discrimination, and exclusion faced by this marginalized group. Their inclusion in this project has brought about an understanding of, and sensitivity and tolerance to, diverse marginalized groups before a larger collective. Through their engagement in this project, LGBTQI+ community members have emerged as role models for many others in the same community and beyond. The issues that are raised and discussed in the project group meetings are also elevated to the District Level LGBTQI+ forum, bringing larger visibility and prominence to the issues.

The backing from parents, communities, and key stakeholders served as a lynchpin in establishing an enabling environment for youth leaders, particularly in fostering a paradigm shift in gender perspectives and altering the perceived roles of girls. Their unwavering support not only bolstered the efforts of youth leaders but also acts as a catalyst for societal transformation. By endorsing and facilitating their daughters' involvement in leadership roles and non-traditional activities such as sports or advocacy for change, parents contributed significantly to dismantling gender barriers and fostering inclusivity.

**Synergies with the govt schemes** - Praajak, the implementing organization, has a proven record of effective collaboration and good rapport with various government departments and community influencers in the target geographies. They have been successful in their effort to empower communities to generate demand for government action and service delivery and claim their rights on various issues related to health rights, sports for empowerment, gender, climate change, forced migration, trafficking in persons, and environment-induced displacement through community-led advocacy. The project has generated awareness among the community, especially children and youth, on the various schemes that the communities can benefit from.

At the local level, the project has collaborated mainly with the local government, village-level health facilitators, and the child helpline services. Since most of the schemes are routed through schools, almost all the children and young adults are seen to receive the benefits of Kanyasree, Rupasree, Sabuj Sathi, one-time support for smartphones, and free and compulsory education. The family members are well aware of schemes like Lokkhir Bhandar, Khaddyo Sathi, Krishak Bondhu, Window and Old-age Pension, and Indira Awas Yojna, and they largely receive benefits of the schemes as per the eligibility criteria. The services provided by the Sushatho Kendra are also being opted for by pregnant and lactating mothers. However, the newly launched services for adolescents and senior citizens are yet to be streamlined.

There are a couple of schemes with a primary focus on adolescents and young adults, such as Sabala, Yavasree, and WB student credit card schemes. These are lesser/not known to the respondents. None of the respondents reported being linked with these schemes. Possible reasons could be that the linkages are mostly facilitated at the block or district level, and the project is rather a localised one.

In West Bengal, Anwesha Clinic is a promising initiative started in 2019 to provide counselling and medical facilities to adolescents relating to menstrual problems, puberty, unwanted pregnancy, and depression, among others. However, respondents have shared that these Clinics do not function properly due to a lack of trained staff. The project has immense scope and opportunity to create demand for quality and effective services at these clinics. Focused on children and adolescents, this service can benefit the population greatly in addressing the mental health and reproductive health issues of the target population.

Samajik Suraksha Yojna is another important scheme implemented by the Labour Department for workers in the unorganised sector. With the high prevalence of unsafe migration in the region, linkages with such schemes would benefit a large section of the vulnerable migrant population. Shastho Sathi's card is also reported as unavailable to many families. The youth leaders empowered under the project have information and knowledge on the existing gap between the demand and the service delivery of government schemes and benefits. The legacy of the project, in the form of youth leadership and children's collectives, can be sustained towards community upliftment through continued convergence with local governance and influencing its mechanisms.

## Case Study: Redefining Life's Game with Kabaddi: Her Journey

In the heart of Nimaisara, Malda, a tale of empowerment unfolds through the experiences of Ayesha Ahmed, a 19-year-old student in class XI at Malda Railway School. Ayesha's journey from a spectator to a sports enthusiast epitomizes the transformative impact of embracing opportunities, particularly through her involvement with Praajak. Sports gifted her with resilience, perseverance, and a plethora of life skills that surpassed her expectations.

### Discovering her Passion

Ayesha's journey began nearly five years ago when she chanced upon a group of girls playing sports in a local playground near her residence. She started watching them regularly but was hesitant to participate in the game due to the prevailing societal and gender norms. Girls in her society were discouraged from participating in physical activities, but Ayesha felt a strong urge to join them. She approached her mother, but met with an immediate and resounding refusal. With determination and persistence, expressing her earnest desire to participate in sports, she pursued her mother. Though initially hesitant, Ayesha's mother recognized her daughter's passion and eventually permitted her to pursue her interests. Thus, Ayesha embarked on her journey with Praajak, guided by their supportive mentors.

Under the nurturing guidance of Praajak, Ayesha immersed herself in the world of Kabaddi, honing her skills with dedication and perseverance. Her participation in sports not only brought her personal fulfillment but also served as a catalyst for profound self-discovery. Winning the first prize in sports during a Teacher's Day celebration marked a pivotal moment in Ayesha's life, shattering the societal barriers that had constrained her aspirations. It was an awakening for Ayesha, who had long yearned for the opportunity to embrace her passion for sports despite the prevailing gender norms that dictated otherwise.

A momentous opportunity presented itself when Ayesha was selected to participate in a Kabaddi Tournament in Kolkata. Emerging victorious and clinching the coveted trophy, Ayesha's triumph reverberated far beyond the confines of the sports arena. Witnessing the transformation in her own outlook and the positive shift in the behavior of her family and community members, Ayesha realized the profound impact of her achievements. It was a moment of epiphany—a testament to the limitless potential that lay within her and the transformative power of perseverance and self-belief.

### Kabaddi is more than just a sport

Beyond the confines of the Kabaddi field, Ayesha found herself immersed in a holistic learning experience facilitated by Praajak. Through informative sessions on children's rights, personal safety, and effective

communication, Ayesha gained valuable insights that extended beyond the realm of sports. These sessions equipped her with the necessary tools to navigate various challenges with confidence and resilience.

As Ayesha continued to excel in Kabaddi, she not only garnered recognition within her community but also inspired a shift in attitudes towards gender roles and capabilities. Her success served as a beacon of hope for young girls aspiring to defy societal expectations and pursue their passions unapologetically. After she completed her sessions with Praajak, a few girls were picked up as future leaders, and Ayesha was one of them. Now, she operates as a leader, and under her leadership, there are 5 groups whom she mentors thrice a week. She says, "This space allows me to establish my identity; it gives me immense pride while children and guardians consider me a leader and pay respect." No wonder her newfound identity is pushing her to break glass ceilings every day.

The same can be said about her personal life as well, where she is setting examples everyday. She shared a recent example when her raising her voice against sexual abuse ensured that no one in her community had to undergo a similar experience. Her family enrolled Ayesha with a religious teacher, who offered classes at his house. After a few days of classes, she started feeling uncomfortable as the teacher started making undue advances, touching her private parts, and even trying to kiss her. She says, *"I felt terrible but could not protest immediately. Later, I gathered courage and shared it with the wife of the teacher, my mother and grandmother"*. The religion teacher is now not allowed to take individual classes at his house. Rather, a group of boys and girls take sessions in an open area in the mosque. Ayesha says, *"I am glad that by raising my voice against sexual abuse, I could protect other girls of my locality and ensure that no one else encounters such a situation as me. I learned about good touch/bad touch during the sessions with Praajak, and that helped me to identify the wrong behaviour of the teacher"*.

## Embracing the future

Ayesha is quite optimistic about her future. She wants to be a social worker and has her eyes set on economic independence. She said, *"Marriage can wait till I complete my studies and establish my career."* Even though marriage is not on her cards now, she aspires for a life partner who can support her career choices and treat her with mutual respect and equality. Ayesha's journey exemplifies the transformative power of embracing one's passions and breaking free from societal constraints. Through her unwavering determination and the support of organizations like Praajak, Ayesha inspires young girls everywhere, proving that anything is possible with courage and perseverance.

# Case Study: Empowering Through Sports: Tanima's Journey

Tanima's story underscores the resilience, determination, and empowerment amidst adversity. As a young girl growing up in a household where domestic violence and gender discrimination were the norm, Tanima faced numerous challenges that threatened to derail her dreams. However, through her involvement in a Sports for Empowerment Project, facilitated by Prajaak, Tanima found the strength and support she needed to overcome obstacles and chart her own path towards a brighter future. Now, she is pursuing her graduation at Malda College and is one of the Youth leaders in her community. In almost a Phoenix-like resurgence, she is marching toward a brighter future, though her earlier struggles were undeniably stark.

## The Struggle

Tanima's early years were marked by the absence of parental support and the presence of domestic turmoil. She spent her early life at her grandparents' place until she was in Grade V. Returning to her parent's place was also acrimonious. Witnessing her mother endure daily abuse fueled Tanima's determination to break free from the cycle of violence and build a better life for herself and her family. She says, *"When I came to know that after my birth, my father was extremely upset as he wanted a boy. I was completely shattered, but I never gave up on proving myself."* Despite facing rejection and disappointment, including the revelation that her birth was met with disappointment by her father, Tanima refused to succumb to despair.

However, familial neglect and a dark childhood led her to resort to seeking solace in a romantic relationship at a tender age. She hoped that the void left by familial neglect would be filled. *'Since I never got any attention or love from my father, I fell for him as my boyfriend offered attention and love in abundance. And, I decided to marry him at the age of 15 to come out from the broken family,'* Tanima says. Once her father learned about her relationship, Tanima's aspirations were met with resistance and hostility from her family. She plunged into a state of despair and depression. Despite these setbacks, Tanima persevered, sitting for her exams amidst emotional turmoil but failing to achieve the desired results.

## The Transformation

Tanima's life took a positive turn when she discovered the Sports for Empowerment Project run by Prajaak. One day after the Madhyamik exam, when Tanima was with her friends, she saw that a group of girls were playing Kabaddi in her locality. Looking at the cheer and joy within the girls, she felt like joining them and expressed her interest to the facilitators from Praajak. She requested the facilitators to speak with her father since Tanima knew that her father would not allow her to play outside. With the support of facilitators, Tanima bravely confronted her father's objections and gained permission to participate in the sports activities, albeit with certain restrictions. Engaging in sports not only lifted Tanima's spirits but also expanded her horizons, exposing her to crucial issues such as child rights, gender inequality, and legal provisions for children. She felt liberated and soon came out of depression.

An unexpected turn in her life was around the corner. Under the influence of close relatives and neighbors, Tanima's father was planning to marry her off and soon announced his decision. Tanima felt extremely frightened as she was not ready to get married. Finally, she confided to one of the project facilitators. The facilitator encouraged her to speak with her father, but Tanima was not at all confident, as the relationship was never conducive. Tanima says, *"Didi(Praajak's facilitator) helped to analyze the reason for my father's behavior. Finally, I gathered the courage to speak to my father and convinced him that I wanted to continue my education and stand beside my father as a son"*. She felt that her father understood her for the first time

in her life, acceding to her request. This was the beginning of the remarkable transformation in their relationship. Now, her father consults her more than often on important decisions, making her feel valued and important. Her parent's relationship is also improving, and she can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

## Her Aspiration

Empowered by her experiences, Tanimia emerged as a leader within her community, leveraging her knowledge and confidence to inspire and educate others. Leading multiple groups, Tanimia and her peers are spearheading initiatives to address pressing social issues such as child marriage, child labor, and gender-based discrimination in the community. Driven by a desire to effect lasting change, Tanimia aspires to pursue higher education in social work and become a beacon of hope for marginalized communities.

Tanimia's journey exemplifies the transformative power of sports in empowering individuals and communities. Through perseverance, resilience, and support from initiatives like the Sports for Empowerment Project, Tanimia has overcome adversity, reclaimed her agency, driving positive change in her community. Her story serves as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the potential for transformation through collective action and empowerment initiatives.



## 5. Recommendation

The *Kabaddi for Empowerment in West Bengal* project has significantly enhanced awareness of issues related to climate change, unsafe migration, and gender discrimination, notably improving resilience and agency among youth, adolescents, and children. It has promoted ownership and participation of children and youth in local governance, particularly in climate-distressed and marginalized communities in the target districts of West Bengal. Overall, the project has laid a robust foundation for sustained development and improved well-being of youth in targeted regions of Siliguri, Malda, and Behrampur. The program in the Sundarbans is reported to be at a nascent stage in highlighting any considerable impact on the target community. However, the evaluation has captured certain emerging indicators that suggest positive effects on the ground. The evaluation has also identified opportunities to address gaps in ongoing intervention (in the Sundarbans area) and inform future programming on the issue. Listed below are a few recommendations:

### Program Design

- **Incremental focus on enhancing children's communication skills:** LSMT results suggested that children performed poorly in communication. Hence, the program should focus incrementally on bridging this gap.
- **Include online safety module for children and adolescents:** Given the widely prevalent addiction to smartphones and online gaming, the program should consider including an online safety module for children and adolescents. Topics related to cyberbullying, pornography, and online harassment must be included in discussions and forums. Teachers and parents must be included as training participants on these issues to provide necessary guidance and supervision to children and youth. The curriculum must continue to incorporate value-based learning for children to increase their sense of responsibility towards and ownership of their actions.
- **Consider convergence with schools at multiple levels:**
  - Conduct teachers' training on issues of gender-based practices: Since children spend a considerable amount of time at school and teachers play a pivotal role in moulding their thoughts and behaviours, training teachers on issues of gender-based behaviours may help further cascade knowledge to children and parents.
  - Introduce K4E in schools during Physical Education classes for long-term sustainability.
  - Consider leveraging the cadre of Youth Leaders for conducting Safety Audits, Child-Friendly Policies
- **Focus on system strengthening efforts:** The pathway to sustainability of a community-led and child/youth participatory intervention to addressing social issues lies in an integrated rights-based approach that capacitates the community to generate demand for quality and timely services of government schemes and benefits; address structural barriers posed by prohibitive social norms; and establish accountability among key community stakeholders (parents and community groups) in creating safe and enabling environment for children, youth and other vulnerable groups. 'Kabaddi for Empowerment through Sports in West Bengal' project has consciously weaved these interventions in the program design and implementation. However, the evaluation has highlighted the need for focused strategies around strengthening systems.
  - Work more intensively with families by facilitating intra-household dialogue to endorse family members to promote the participation of girls in Kabaddi and support their engagement in collective efforts towards social change.
  - Empower children and youth to understand and embrace their rights and strengthen their capacities so that they can generate demand (individually and as a collective) for protection from harm, discrimination, and abuse from community and local governance and also claim their entitlements and benefits from various existing government mechanisms.

- It has been reported that the local child protection mechanisms like the Village Level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC) and Anwesha Clinics are not as effective in ensuring the protection of children or delivering services to the beneficiaries in the target communities. Youth leaders and children's groups can play an effective role in monitoring the functioning of these Centers, generate awareness among the community on these mechanisms, create demand for high-quality and timely services, and finally link service seekers to service providers – thereby bridging the current gap between demand and supply.
- The project has the scope to establish strategic partnerships and collaboration with institutions that have a great influence on the lives and choices of children and youth. It is recommended schools and religious institutions/leaders are engaged in addressing issues related to child marriage, social and gender norms that discriminate against women and girls, etc. The youth leaders can leverage the platforms provided by schools, community events, and religious festivals to create awareness and engage these key stakeholders in dialogue. Establishing linkages between youth leaders and local civil society organisations and networks can benefit the community in various endeavours around community mobilisation and access to varied need-based training on issues and skills.
- The Youth Leaders, established as agents of change, must plunge into proactive leadership roles in facilitating and advancing child/youth-led collaborative actions. Through a participatory micro-planning exercise, the youth leaders can help other children/youth to identify problems, define solutions and actions, mobilise local resources, and track progress.
- Consider having programmatic targets for most marginalised groups, such as LGBTQIA+, as part of output targets

### **Elevate Gender Transformative Programming Efforts**

The project operates in areas where patriarchy and social and gender norms are deep-rooted challenges and prohibitive for the development and advancement of girls. Girls' agency, bargaining power, mobility, education, and power to make life choices remain at the lowest in these areas. To address this, it is recommended that gender transformative efforts be elevated within the project. Some of the suggestive actions are:

- Conduct structured Gender Intra-Household Dialogues to elevate the voices of girls and women within households and decision-making.
- Develop a Male Engagement Strategy to garner their support and participation in the redistribution of gender roles within the household.
- Include girls in the stakeholder dialogues that the project engages in and ensure greater dialogue with girls at all levels of governance.
- Collectivise and Include women's groups within the intervention, e.g., mother's groups. As a collective, women's circle of influence extends to the households and the community at large, leading to positive social and economic outcomes. In the target communities, migration is the least common among women; hence, they can be the anchor point for most interventions.

### **Need to Include Inclusive Lens within Kabaddi for Empowerment**

The project has taken Kabaddi into marginalised communities as a mechanism for the empowerment of girls and young women. It is also important to highlight that the project was designed to shift prohibitive gender and social norms that manifest in gender-discriminatory practices of child marriage, gender-based violence and trafficking in person. Given the exclusive focus on girls in sports, it is imperative to revisit the theory of change that rests on the notion that sport for development, focused on girls, creates the necessary and sufficient conditions for transformative change in bending the practises and the notion of prohibitive social norms. Sports for Empowerment essentially needs to focus on gender, beyond girls, in promoting positive masculinities. During its implementation phase, the project has been able to create safe spaces for

girls in the field and outside to collectivise, find a voice, and gain family support. The intervention needed to go beyond the comfort zone of a girl-exclusive space that nurtured an environment of collaboration, teamwork, empathy, and non-aggressive communication, which are inherent to socialised gendered cooperative attributes assigned to the girl. A mixed group approach to Kabaddi for Empowerment is highly recommended to help boys inculcate the values of cooperative approaches, thereby shifting the needle towards positive masculinity. The co-ed approach to Kabaddi will also help in the transference and re-distribution of gender normative attitudes and practically challenge power dynamics on the playground, which will truly empower children of all genders.

## Program Communication and Knowledge Management

- **Leveraging Innovative and Interactive Communications Platforms for Sharing Stories of Change:** Working with Children and Youth and delving into issues of climate change, migration, and gender has provided an opportunity to come across several exceptional case studies. These case studies must be brought to the forefront through an interactive communication platform in which Tdh must invest. The project has already created role models in youth and children who are articulate, confident, and driven as change agents. Their stories of transformative shifts are sure to inspire many others. Digital communications platforms, reels (Instagram), shorts (YouTube), and the Tdh website can provide the right platform to transmit inspirational voices nationwide for greater mileage and chances of replication.
- **Enhance focus on knowledge management and learning opportunities:** The project should focus on learning documents, success stories, and documentation efforts. The project's RMF should also have specific targets for knowledge products such as blogs, articles, case studies, and position papers to capture programmatic learnings appropriately.

## Program Sustainability

**Transference of Ownership to Children and Youth in the Communities:** The youth leaders envision the sports-based gender transformation project as a catalyst for profound societal change in the years to come. They foresee a future where the project not only empowers girls to break free from traditional gender constraints but also fosters a culture of inclusivity and equality within their communities.

---

*"When the project identified me as a potential youth leader, I initially was apprehensions. However, as I began assuming responsibilities and witnessed younger children in my community listening to me and showing respect, I experienced a profound sense of recognition. This recognition served as a powerful motivator, propelling me to undertake further initiatives and contribute more to my community." – Youth Leader in Malda*

---

With sustained effort and continued support from stakeholders, they anticipate an expansion of the project's reach, reaching more marginalised communities and amplifying its impact. The youth leaders are optimistic that, in the coming years, the project will contribute significantly to dismantling gender barriers, empowering girls to realise their full potential, and fostering a more equitable society for all. The Youth Leaders expressed that the project ended at a crucial juncture, at a time when they needed additional mentoring and tailored support to continue in the endeavour. Despite the confidence and skills gained by the youth and children, nurtured and capacitated under the project, the project participants seemed somewhat dependent on the project staff in stakeholder management and offering advice and guidance to other children and youth in the community. Tdh could focus on exploring the possibility of ensuring greater participation and leadership of youth and children in implementing the S4P program. Child- and youth-led research and implementation of the program is the next obvious stage for the program to grow and sustain itself. The project could continue to engage in the following capacity to ensure sustainability:

- Conduct refresher training of Youth Leaders on specific topics needed
- Connect youth leaders with mentors and facilitate virtual mentoring sessions
- Encourage youth leaders to capture success stories from the field that highlight instances of challenging systemic barriers and prohibitive gender norms. Publish these transformative stories for larger visibility of local role models.
- Conduct workshops with youth and children in developing collaborative action plans (CAPs) in advancing advocacy efforts within the community, with a strong focus on resource mobilization strategy.
- Connect youth leaders to regional and national platforms promoting active citizenship among children and youth.

**Need for issue diversification:** Since the Tdh program has matured substantially and grown significantly across geographies, it is time that the organization adds the element of economic inclusion and livelihoods to the program. It is acknowledged that there is a dearth of job opportunities in the target communities. Instead of indefinitely looking for jobs or migrating for work, the youth are keen on exploring the possibilities of entrepreneurial ventures. The youth leaders are keen to acquire training on practical and entrepreneurial skills like, financial literacy, digital literacy, business development, communications and marketing, etc. This will certainly equip the Children and Youth into the next segment of their lives, , expanding their scope and possibilities of economic engagement. It is important to recognize that it is not just about skills training and capacity strengthening in livelihoods but also about access to the market, business development services, credit, and employment services.

**Conduct market research** involving youth and children in the study to identify opportunities, gaps, and a list of existing services and service providers. Also, identify women/youth-friendly value chains in agriculture and livelihoods. The insights gathered from the market research can inform future programming. Tdh can consider partnerships with organizations specializing in skill development or livelihoods. Market Research is a comprehensive exercise that rules out speculation around livelihoods and economic activities in the region. The FGDs conducted with the youth leaders provided insufficient information to make references to the existing gaps and opportunities. However, working with children and youth, on their empowerment and holistic development, must include discourse and capacitation towards their economic empowerment, beyond just career aspiration.

**Leverage Technology:** The youth leaders have expressed keen interest in building small but multiple alliances at the community level. They perceive Youth and Children's groups as crucial platforms for amplifying their voices, pooling resources, and collectively addressing shared challenges. Furthermore, they recognize the potential of alliances to foster mutual support, skill and knowledge sharing, and advocacy for their rights and interests. However, the challenges of attrition, and limitation of time and resources continue to pose as barriers. As an enabler and catalyst of change that is foreseen in this program, technology can be effectively leveraged. Penetration of smartphones is high in the target communities, with every household having access to a mobile gadget. Tackling social problems requires a plethora of services and resources that the target communities do not have access to. The youth and children of these communities are observed to be highly active on various social media platforms. Their stickiness to technology and gadgets can be put to productive use. Children and Youth can:

- Create virtual peer support groups.
- Seek virtual psycho-social counseling support extended by professionals located across the country
- Seek virtual mentoring and career counseling services, including support from Praajak staff
- Avail various government schemes and benefits and financial services
- Access free virtual learning Courses that boost professional and life skills

- Reach out to a larger audience beyond the current target communities in advocating for change.

To integrate livelihoods more thoughtfully and purposefully, TDH must first assess the needs, interests, and capacities of the youth participants. This involves conducting thorough research and consultations to understand their skills, aspirations, and the economic opportunities available in their communities. Once the key areas of interest and potential economic activities are identified, tailored training programs can be designed to build relevant skills and competencies. These programs should focus on technical skills related to specific livelihood options and essential soft skills such as communication, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy.

Youth Leaders who are keen to pursue Kabaddi must be provided with continued support through training and participation in events. This serves as both an incentive and a means to create additional role models within the community. A structured mechanism can be implemented to assess the interests, competencies, and feasibility of selected youths. Furthermore, it is essential to map training institutes under the Sector Skills Council within the existing geographical area and establish collaborations with potential employers to offer paid internships and job placements. This model not only fosters the growth of change-makers but also encourages sustained engagement and development within the community.

Upon field visits, it has become evident that opportunities exist to foster entrepreneurial endeavors among youth leaders. For instance, in Malda, renowned as the foremost mango-producing region, there lies the potential for ventures in mango pulp preservation and the production of derivative products such as 'Amshotto', Mango drinks, Mango papad, and various other commodities. These avenues can serve as platforms for either group or individual business ventures, provided that technical training, access to small-scale loans, and establishment of market linkages are facilitated. Similarly, every geographical region possesses its own set of available resources and traditional skill sets, which can be leveraged in collaboration with local governing bodies like panchayats and departments such as Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

## Annexure I – Key Indicators

S. No	Indicator	Baseline Value
1.	Percentage of C&Ys who have applied and taken initiatives on their own to access services and programmes.	52%
2.	% of young children raised their voices against harmful gender-based practices.	34%
3.	Percentage of C&Y who demonstrate knowledge of protection and risk mitigation.	55%
4.	Percentage of children reporting involvement in campaigns on child rights	43%
5.	Percentage of children reporting that they have a support if felt threatened	64%
6.	Percentage of children reporting that they know how to react at risk	55%
7.	Percentage of children reporting that they know where to get information if anxious or upset	68%
8.	Average LSMT score of children	104
9.	Percentage of households reporting that girls should regularly participate in sports	90%
10.	Percentage of boys reporting playing sports daily	66%
11.	Percentage of girls reporting playing sports daily	26%
12.	Percentage of households ever consulting their child on financial or household decision	55%
13.	Percentage of households believing climate change has increased the migration of children and youth in community	60%
14.	Percentage of households participating in any disaster management drill in the past 12 months	6%
15.	Percentage of households with at least one migrant member	46%
16.	Percentage of households consulting children in the decision-making for migration	7%
17.	Percentage of households reporting that they would you stop migration if given a chance	71%
18.	Percentage of households reporting that migration has increased in the community	88%
19.	Percentage of households reporting that girls should marry before 18	4%
20.	<b>Percentage of families and community members able to identify harmful gender practices in their own community</b>	
<b>Harmful gender practices</b>		<b>% of HH identifying it</b>
Bad Touch		95%
Physical violence at home/school		73%
Sexual harassment or exploitation		60%
Girls married off before they are 18		58%
Gender bias in treatment at home		40%



Girls not allowed to play	25%
Boys encouraged to take part in household chores	68%
Girls not encouraged to pursue education	21%

## Annexure II – Research Instruments

# Guideline for Key Informant Interview with Government Stakeholders

## Objective of the Study:

## Thank you and Consent:

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences participating in the Sports for Empowerment project by TDH and Praajak/ISWS. As a part of the study, we are assessing the impact of the project, identifying good practices and inform the next phase of the project.

The interview should take less than an hour. With your consent, I will like to record this interview, because I do not want to miss any of your comments. I hope that is fine with you. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time. Are there any questions about what I have just explained? Are you willing to participate in this interview?

_____	_____	_____
Interviewee	Witness	Date

## General Guidelines for conducting IDIs:

For interviewer it is important to remember that the person being interviewed should be considered the expert (having valuable knowledge about your research topic) and the interviewer is considered the student. As a researcher, you will engage with interviewee by posing questions in a neutral manner, listening attentively, and asking follow-up questions that probe for more details based on the interviewee's responses.

Some points to take into consideration:

- Encourage interviewee to detail the reasons for their conclusions or recommendations.
- Maintain a neutral attitude – be a sympathetic listener and avoid giving the impression of having strong views on the subject under discussion.

- Quickly summarize the major comments heard throughout the interview and ask informants if you covered all the major points.
- Take good notes to capture information like enumerator observations and other contextual information

Details	
Date of Interview	
Name	
Gender	
Designation	
Department	
Village/Block/District/State	
Interviewer	
Place of Interview	
How long has been in this position	
How long has the association with TDH/Praajak/ISWS been	

## About the Program

1. Are you aware about the Kabaddi – Sports for Development Project? (The respondent may not be aware of the technical name of the project; hence, the interviewer may refer to the project by creating association with the partner/implementing organisation/staff)
  - a. What, according to your knowledge, is the project about? Probe into the issue being addressed, and why.
  - b. Which are the various groups in the community that the project interacts with? Who are the target audience?
  - c. Have you been approached by the project staff on this project? When and for what purpose?
  - d. What kind of engagement do you have (or look to have) with this initiative? Probe into the various activities/interventions that the interviewed stakeholder is/will be potentially involved in.
  - e. Do you feel it is important to engage with children and youth, in building their capacity, participation and leadership to tackle these serious issues? Please elaborate.
  - f. How do you look to engage with the project and the community, to ensure that sports continue and is established as a platform for issue-based discussion?

## Impact of Climate Change in Sundarbans

2. Do you think climate change is a big concern for the people and communities living in South 24 parganas (specifically, Gosaba and Patharpratima)?
  - a. What are the changes seen in the last 5-10 years as a result of climate change? Have you observed any change/shifts in temperatures and weather patterns in your region? Probe for the incidences of cyclones, decrease of mangrove forests, salination of the land?

- b. How have households been affected?<sup>14</sup>
  - c. How are children and youth specifically affected?<sup>15</sup>
  - d. Has migration increased as a result of climate change? For whom?
3. How are children and youth specifically affected by the impacts of climate change?
    - a. Probe on the impact on education of children and youth;
    - b. Probe for any abuse, exploitation, violence that children may be vulnerable to, and how does these impact the mental health of the child and youth.
    - c. Do you feel that the environmental challenges may limit future opportunities for children and youth in terms of education, employment, and overall well-being?
    - d. Do you feel that the young generation are losing their sense of belongingness, sense of safety and security, and cultural practices in their current habit, because of the impacts of climate change leading to displacement and migration?
  4. What is the kind of support provided by the government in the event of a disaster? How do you determine who to provide it to?
    - a. What are the local early warning systems in place?
    - b. How is the information communicated to each household?
    - c. Who all play an important role in extending support to the community during an event of disaster?

## Migration and its Impact

1. How frequent or ubiquitous is the migration in 24 South Parganas, especially in the two blocks that the program is operating in? How it has changed over the past 5-10 years and what are the key reasons for the same?
  - a. Probe for the key migration destinations for the community members, main types of jobs that the migrants pick up at the destination corridors and seasonality of migration, if any.
  - b. How do people usually choose to migrate? Probe if there are existing networks/individuals through which they migrate or they migrate on their own.
  - c. Probe for who all in the household migrate. Do women and children migrate as well?
  - d. What are the positive and negative impacts of migration? Can you specify how girls and boys are impacted differently.
2. Are there reported cases of child marriage, child labour and trafficking in persons (children) from these communities? What is the source of the reporting?
  - a. Have these cases increased in the last 5 years?
  - b. Are there incidents where children and youth have migrated without the knowledge of the parents/adults? How has the community/stakeholders responded to such incidents?
  - c. Are there incidents where both parents migrate, leaving the child behind? How does this impact the child? (probe into the vulnerabilities and psycho-social wellbeing)

---

<sup>14</sup> Probe for the loss of life, property, livelihoods for the household; Probe for any impact on the health of community members; Probe for the impact on community institutions, infrastructures such as school; Probe migration pattern, disaggregated by age and gender.

- d. Are there any stigma related to migration of women and girls in particular? Probe into how women and girls are treated when they come back to their communities? How does that impact their psycho-social wellbeing?
  - e. Are there successful models or practices that promotes positive and holistic re/integration of migrant children and youth at the destination/back to the community?
3. Is Kabaddi (or Sports) for Empowerment an effective route to address serious issues like the impact of climate change and unsafe migration? Probe into the rationale
- a. Are there any events or strategies undertaken by the government that leverage sports as a forum for discourses and awareness affecting local communities, especially children?
  - b. Do you feel Sports (like Kabaddi) can be an enabler to build resilience among community members, especially children, in tackling issues that concern them? Please elaborate why and how.
  - c. Who according you are the key departments/agencies that play a crucial role in addressing the issues that communities are faced with as a result of climate change.
  - d. Are there specific schemes, or budget allocated for persons affected by climate change and unsafe migration?
  - e. What are the specific schemes for children and women? (Probe for the role of government support, across the three phases – rescue, rehab and recovery)
  - f. What is the government's response mechanism to track migration and to mitigate unsafe migration of children?
  - g. What can be the spill-over effect of the benefits for a project like Sports for Empowerment to the larger community in the target geography?

## Program Integration with the government and other stakeholders and Initiatives

4. What role can Praajak/TDH/ISWS play in capacitating communities to tackle the adversities of climate change resulting in unsafe migration?
- a. Probe for the role of CSOs, across the three phases – rescue, rehab and recovery.
  - b. Are you aware of the existence groups in the community or any other networks or CSOs that work on the same issue in the same community? Do you have any engagement with these groups/networks/organizations?
5. How does/can the program form synergy with government priorities and policies? Is there any plan of policy implementation and promoting replication of good practices through systemic and cross-departmental integration and collaboration?
6. What is the role of the various concerned government departments at various levels to mitigate the risks resulting from climate change and unsafe migration. Probe into the various engagement strategies at:
- a. Community level
  - b. Block level

- c. District level
- d. State level

7 What role can the households and community stakeholders play in establishing the safety net for the children and youth who have been affected by unsafe migration and adverse impacts of climate change?



# FGD TOOL FOR YOUTH LEADERS

## Purpose

To gather in-depth information and opinions of participant based on project's success indicators. This particular tool is designed for the youth leaders of Malda district. This tool is to outline the course of the discussion based on the guiding questions below to ensure that all topics of interest are covered.

Expected time: Approx. 90 minutes

No of expected participants: 15

MoV: attendance sheet, group photo during FGD

## Ice breaking session:

A small icebreaking session will be conducted to make the participants comfortable: Introduce each other in pair saying name, one favorite thing in daily routine and one thing which wish to change

## Introduction on the topic and expectation setting:

A brief introduction and purpose of the FGD will be shared with the participants (The information that they provide us, will be completely confidential and anonymous. If at all the evaluator decides to record then permission must be attained and participants who aren't comfortable must have the complete and free choice to not participate)

## Section 1: General information

Location		
Date		
Time		
No of participants	Below 18 years:	Above 18 Years:
Facilitated by		
Accompanied NGO staff name with designation		
Venue		

## Section 2: Guiding questions

### Generic:

- How do you spend your entire day.
- What are the things in your everyday life that makes you happy?
- What are the things that does not make you so happy?
- If you are given the scope, what would you like to change in your life/locality/surrounding?
- What are the things that you want them be as is?

- What are your dreams and aspirations as a Youth Leader?

### Perception on Migration

- Are you aware about the issue of migration? What are your views of the issue of migration?
- Can you distinguish between safe and unsafe migration?
- How are children and youth affected by migration? (Probe into pros and cons)
- To what extent has the project addressed and continues to address the larger challenge of unsafe migration in the community?
- Do you observe any change in the pattern of migration in last 2 years? If yes please elaborate.
- Have you identified any risk or case within the community in the last 2 years related to unsafe migration? How have you responded? (Probe into the impact on migration during and post COVID)
- As Youth leaders do you consider migration as an important issue to work with? Why?
- How can the alliance of YLs across geographies address the issue of unsafe migration?

### Perception on Gender-based Discrimination/Gender-bias

- Do you think that boys and girls of your family experience the same treatment and opportunities? Please explain your experience
- Is there a difference in the conduct and treatment of youth leaders, based on their gender?
- Is there any change within your parents or community members dealing with boys and girls than before
- What are the typical roles and expectations from youth of different genders? Have you seen any change in roles and expectations in the last 1 year within your own household or in the community where the program has been implemented? Perceived reason for the change? What impact it has on the daily lives of children and youth? Probe into the aspects of gender roles at home; education; sports; occupation; and marriage.
- 
- What is the current standing and interest of the government and the community in addressing gender-gap, gender-based discrimination, and exploitation? What can be the further interventions in creating more awareness towards gender equality and equity, especially among children and youth? Probe into any schemes implementation, awareness camps, training, etc. rolled out in the last year.

### Perception on Sports

- Is Kabaddi a popular sport? How common is kabaddi among girls?
- Is there an increasing trend of taking part in sports, especially Kabaddi?
- Is there any change in approach from the family members towards the participation of girls in sports in the last one year?
- Do you feel, Kabaddi as a sport, has been able to include girls, non-binary, trans persons and persons with disabilities?
  - o If yes, how?
  - o If no, why? (probe in to any challenges for girls related to wearing jersey, ability, restrictions)

- Are there any current challenges in organising Kabaddi sessions in the community? What do you, as YL, do to overcome these challenges? (Probe into availability of designated space, non-participation, lack of support family, mobilisation of resources, etc.)
- As YL do you promote Sports/Kabaddi as a platform for discussion? Do you feel this is an effective format for engaging in discussions? Who facilitates and participates in these discussions? What is discussed?

#### Perception on psychosocial wellbeing and communication skill

- What are some of the concerns among the youth in your community that lead to their anxiety and compromise their mental wellbeing? Do they seek your support? Do you think that being youth leaders you are better placed to handle your psychosocial issues than before? Can you elaborate why?
- What do you understand about psychosocial wellbeing?
- What action do you generally take as youth leaders if you find any of your peers struggling with mental wellbeing? How do you detect/learn if a child or youth is struggling with psychosocial wellbeing?
- How comfortable do you feel expressing your feelings, thoughts and ideas verbally?
- Can you provide an example of a situation where effective verbal communication played a key role? - How well do you believe you listen to others during conversations?
- Can you share an instance where active listening positively influenced the outcome of a discussion? How do you approach conflicts or disagreements in your relationships?
- Can you share a situation where your communication skills were instrumental in resolving a conflict? On a scale from 1 to 10, how confident are you in your ability to effectively solve problems you encounter?
- Can you provide an example of a challenging situation you navigated in the past one year successfully? How confident do you feel now when making decisions about your own life and future?
- Can you recall a decision you made that had positive outcomes, and what influenced your choice?

#### Perception as a Youth Leader

- Can you mention some of your actions as a youth leader/ youth group member to advocate any issues pertaining to children/youth?
- In the past one year, how often have you been contacted to solve a problem or to give your views? Who has contacted you? Have there been the kinds of problems, or what views were sought? What action have you taken to change or challenge these? How comfortable are you to solve problems or raise voice for others?
- Can you mention any example where you have utilized leadership, life skills in practical life?
- Have you received any feedback on your improved skills from your family members/peers?
- Do you identify yourself as a youth leader? What are your responsibilities being a youth leader? How your peer and larger community consider your role as a YL? Over the past one year, has there been any change in your responsibilities as a YL? Probe if there has been incremental growth in responsibilities or commitment? Ask for examples.
- Are you aware which are the key stakeholders of local administration and duty bearers (

responsible for issues related to climate change, child protection, social protection, mental health, sports etc.)? Do they also know you as YL and recognise your opinion?

- In the past one year how have government stakeholders and local community influencers engaged with you?
- What has been your major challenge, in the past one year, in continuing the work? What kind of support or resources you may need to continue the work in future?
- Do you see any change within you pre and post association with the project? If yes, what are the key changes in yourself post the intervention and how it has helped you in your daily life? Probe for the changes in skills, attitude, perception and knowledge.
- Have you received expected/required knowledge and capacities needed for young adults, as well as the resources needed to enable them to play an active role as YL
  - o Do you feel more confident as young leaders to realise their power and agency?
  - o Do you feel more informed on your rights and roles in the community?
  - o Do you feel that you have a better voice and position within the household and community?
- Are there any networks of Youth Leaders in your community or outside? Are you a part of it? What is the modus of communication? What is your nature of engagement?
- How can you take on meaningful role to bring change in behaviour for parents and community towards gender equality and social inclusion?
- How do you intend to create more leaders like you in the community? Do you consider yourself, as a YL, a role model? Who is your role model?
- What is your opinion towards the issues of gender-based discrimination and mental health of young people and how would you suggest to take this forward as youth leader?
- What are some of the key initiatives you would like to take up as a youth leader in the next one year? Who do you need to collaborate with? What support and resources will you require?

#### Perception about the implementing organization

- Are you aware about Praajak organization? How do you know them? Are you still part of their intervention? Say something about the activities you are engaged with Praajak in past?
- Do you feel that these activities of Praajak were helpful for you to evolve as YL? Why? Do you see any change in you before and after your association with Praajak?
- Which training/ sessions provided by Praajak for youth leaders you find most useful? Why? What are some of the key skills you have acquired throughout the project?
- To what extent has the project implemented by Praajak assisted youth leaders to enhance their skills, knowledge and capacities? What are the different areas of capacity development and how it has helped YLs in their daily life? Ask the participant to elaborate with examples.
- Do you yourself miss any handholding or mentoring? How do you currently seek guidance to perform as a YL?
- What role has Praajak played in establishing the liaison between youth leaders and government stakeholders? What kind of resources has been given to youth and the larger community for sustaining the various activities under the intervention? Have you, as a Youth Leader, mobilised

any community resources to continue the work?

- What are the upcoming capacity-building requirements for youth leaders, which Praajak should as per your opinion? How long Praajak should continue working with youth leaders so that they can independently take up the leadership role to bring gender equality?
- Do you have any other suggestion?

# KII TOOL FOR YOUTH LEADERS

## Purpose

To gather in-depth information and opinions of the participant based on the project's success indicators. This particular tool is designed for the youth leaders of Malda district. This tool is to outline the course of the discussion based on the guiding questions below to ensure that all topics of interest are covered.

- Expected time: Approx. 60 minutes
- No of expected participants: 2-3 Online video meeting
- MoV: attendance sheet,

## Ice-breaking session:

A small ice-breaking session will be conducted to make the participants comfortable: Introduce each other in pair saying names, one favourite thing in daily routine, and one thing which wish to change.

## Introduction on the topic and expectation setting:

A brief introduction and purpose of the FGD will be shared with the participants

## Section 1: General information

Location	
Date	
Time	
No of participants	
Facilitated by	

- Tell us how you spend your entire day.
- What are the things in your everyday life make you happy?
- Tell me something which makes you not so happy
- If you are given the power, what would you like to change in your life/locality/surrounding
- What are the things you want to be as it is?
- Do you think that boys and girls in your family experience the same treatment and opportunities? Please explain your experience
- Do you feel worried or observe peers worried or anxious at times? What makes you worried? Do you ever feel frightened? Why?
  - o What do you do when you feel worried, anxious, frightened, upset
- Do you think that you need support to handle your psycho-social issues? If yes what kind of support would be helpful?
- Are you aware about the Praajak organization? How do you know them? Are you part of their intervention? Say something about the activities you are engaged in with Praajak?
- How did you find the engagement with the Sports for empowerment project run by Praajak?



Did you find it useful? If yes, in what ways?

- How would you rate the training and activities conducted during the project? Were they timely and relevant? Why? Do you see any change before and after their intervention?

## **Section 2: Coherence** *(How well does the intervention fit?)*

- Have you come across any other similar intervention by NGOs or the Government, working on the development of skills and capabilities of Youth leaders?
  - If yes, please elaborate on the similarities and differences.
  - Probe on the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the other NGOs or government.
  - Probe for any duplication of efforts as well.

## **Section 3: Effectiveness** *(extent to which the project is achieving or is in track to achieve its objectives)*

- Do you identify yourself as a youth leader? What is your responsibilities being a youth leader? How do your peers and larger community consider your role as a YL? Over the past year, has there been any change in your responsibilities as a YL? Probe if there has been incremental growth in responsibilities or commitment. Ask for examples.
- How effective are the trainings and activities under the Sports for Empowerment project? Were they helpful in gaining new knowledge and practices?
  - How the training has impacted your attitude towards sports, girls, and women?
  - Which training/ sessions provided by Praajak for youth leaders do you find most useful? Why?
  - Can you mention any example where you have utilized the leadership, and lifeskills skills in practical life?
  - Have you received any feedback on your improved skills from your family members/peers?
- To what extent has the project of Praajak assisted youth leaders in enhancing their skills, knowledge, and capacities? What are the different areas of capacity development and how it has helped YLs in their daily life? Ask the participant to elaborate with examples.
- To what extent is the project addressing the larger challenge of unsafe migration in the community?
  - Do you observe any change in the pattern of migration? If yes please elaborate
- Have you experienced any change in the outlook of parents or community towards engaging children and youth? Perceived reason for the change? What impact it has on the daily lives of children and youth?
- Have you received expected/required knowledge and capacities needed for young adults, as

well as the resources needed to enable them to play an active role in strengthening the wellbeing pillars?

- Are you aware which are the key stakeholders of local administration and duty bearers (climate change, child protection, social protection, mental health, sports etc.)? Do they also know you as YL and recognise your opinion?

#### **Section 4: Efficiency** *(extent to which the interventions are being delivered in an economic and timely way)*

- Do you know the roles and accountabilities of all stakeholders (implementing partners, front line workers, and government stakeholders) clearly defined?
- What is the impact of the program on the target population, and how can it be improved?
  - How can the project further encourage leadership, agency and self-efficacy among children and young adults?

#### **Section 5: Impact** *(extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects)*

- Do you identify yourself as a youth leader? What are your responsibilities being a youth leader? How do your peers and larger community consider your role as a YL?
- Do you see any change within your pre and post-association with the project? If yes, what are the key changes in yourself after the intervention, and how it has helped you in your daily life? Probe for the changes in skills, attitude, perception, and knowledge.
  - Do you feel more confident as young leaders to realize their power and agency?
  - Do you feel more informed about your rights and roles in the community?
  - Do you feel that you have a better voice and position within the household and community?
- What more actions can be initiated to further strengthen and capacitate youth leaders so that they can become agents of change and role models to other children and youth in vulnerable situations
- How can an alliance of youth leaders be facilitated across geographies to champion child-centered approaches to prevent unsafe migration?
- What are the risks emerging from the project implementation?
- Do you feel that there are changes in gender-based behaviours of family members and the community?
- Do you think that the issue of mental health and psychosocial support is important and the awareness of the issue is better addressed?
- To what extent is the project addressing the needs of young girls, non-binary and trans persons?

#### **Section 6: Sustainability** *extent to which the positive effects of the intervention are likely to continue.*

- What is the current status of government and community to address gender-based differences in behaviours and how can the project further create more awareness?
- Do you feel that with the intervention by Praajak to date, your parents and larger community members can bring change in practicing gender-neutral treatment for children and young adults?
- What is your opinion towards the issues of gender-based discrimination and the mental health of young people and how would you suggest taking this forward as youth leader along with Praajak?
- How actions the youth leader group can plan to bring change in behaviour for parents and the community towards gender equality?
- What are some of the changes in the capacity-building training you would suggest for Praajak? Is there anything that can be done differently by Praajak, if it chooses to work again on the same topic? What are the supports that the youth leaders can be offered so that they can independently take up the leadership role to bring gender equality?

# Guideline for Key Informant Interview with TDH/Praajak/ISWS

## Objective of the Study:

## Thank you and Consent:

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to talk to you about your experiences participating in the Sports for Empowerment project by TDH and Praajak. As a part of the study, we are assessing the impact of the project, identifying good practices and inform the next phase of the project.

The interview should take less than an hour. With your consent, I will like to record this interview, because I do not want to miss any of your comments. I hope that is fine with you. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because we're on tape, please be sure to speak up so that we don't miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be shared with research team members and we will ensure that any information we include in our report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time. Are there any questions about what I have just explained? Are you willing to participate in this interview?

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

Date

## General Guidelines for conducting IDIs:

1. The interview should be done in a place free from noise and interference
2. Interviewer of the IDIs should use Questions should be open-ended rather than closed-ended for the discussion and establish a permissive environment
3. The interviewer will make a smooth and snappy introduction of the project and the objective of the IDIs. S/he should
  - a. Welcome the interviewee. Confirm that the virtual meeting link is working alright and that the respondent can hear you well. Check if s/he would like you to speak at a slower pace.
  - b. Provide an overview of the topic.

c. Set the ground rules for the discussion.

d. Introduce the first question.

4. Use probes as needed.

Date of Interview	
Name	
Organization	
Designation	
Since when you have been working with TDH/ Praajak?	
What was your role in the project?	

## About the Program

1. Can you brief us about TDH's Sports for Empowerment program? How was it conceptualized and how has it evolved over the tenure?
  - Probe for the overall vision and goal of the program.
  - What are the key focus areas that TDH/Praajak is trying to address?
  - How does TDH/ Praajak assess the policy and regulatory priorities regarding the children and youth of the region and engage with them?
  - Who are the key stakeholders that are associated with the TDH/Prajak or are planning to associate?
  - Why have you particularly selected Kabaddi as the sport? Have you ever received any feedback from the participants on wanting to play any other sport?
  - Since the sport is only played by girls, is there a plan to introduce it to boys as well? What kind of feedback have you received from boys in the community when they see girls play?
2. What is the overall Theory of Change for the program? Please explain the end goals that you are trying to achieve through this program and the pathways for it.
3. What has been the source of data and information in identifying the problem that is being addressed under the project?

### Project Implementation

4. What are the activities and sub-activities that are undertaken in the project?
5. What were the challenges that you faced/are facing in the inception of the project?
  - Mobilising families and children

- Identifying community spaces where Kabaddi can be played
  - Creating an acceptance for girls to wear sports jersey and play in community spaces
  - Organising the annual Kabaddi meet and convincing parents to allow their daughters to go to Kolkata
  - Dealing with adolescent boys (if there were any cases of boys teasing the girls)
  - Any other challenges.
6. What, according to you, are the major risks associated with implementing the project and how do you mitigate it? (Injuries, safeguarding risks, any other)
  7. How did you stir the interest of children to attend the gender sessions? What are the themes covered in the module?

## **Impact of Climate Change in Malda/Sundarbans**

1. In the past 10 years, have you observed any changes/shifts in temperatures and weather patterns in your region? Probe for the incidences of cyclones, floods, heatwaves decrease of mangrove forests, and salination of the land. If yes, please explain the change you see.
2. How have households been affected by climate change?
  - a. Probe for the loss of life, property, and livelihoods for the household.
  - b. Probe for any impact on the health of community members.
  - c. Probe for the impact on community institutions, and infrastructures such as schools
  - d. Probe migration pattern, disaggregated by age and gender.
3. How Children and Youth of the households have been affected by climate change? Is there any disproportionate burden that they have to bear? If yes, what have been those?
  - i. Probe on the impact on education and livelihoods of children and youth.
  - ii. Probe for other negative impacts such as GBV, Child exploitation such as Children getting engaged in labour, children being unattended by parents, elder siblings being forced to take care of youngsters, violence, and abuse.
  - iii. In case of any abuse, exploitation, or violence, how does it impact the mental health of the child and youth?
    1. In case of such situations, what are the available support mechanisms? Are children and the community aware of those child protection mechanisms? Do they access those? If not, why? If yes, how effective are those?
4. How have households coped with the negative consequences of the impact induced by climate change?
  - a. Probe for the role of government support, across the three phases – rescue, rehab, and recovery.
    - i. Are early warning mechanisms working there?
    - ii. Is there any indigenous practices or coping mechanisms available within the community?
  - b. Probe for the role of CSOs, across the three phases – rescue, rehab, and recovery.



5. What have been the household strategies to cope with these negative consequences? Probe if the households have adopted migration as a strategy to cope up with climate change.
  - a. Do the community recognize climate change as an issue?
  - b. Also, please explain the strategies that they have adopted to cope with climate change. Probe for the immediate, short, and long-term coping mechanisms.
6. Are there any initiatives taken up by the local government?
  - a. Any actions initiated related to climate change and disaster risk reduction from panchayat?
  - b. Do children and villagers take active part in Gram Panchayat Development plan (GPDP)?
  - c. Is climate change and increase of natural disasters part of GPDP?
7. How do you assess the impact of climate change on the mental health of the communities? Probe for the incremental impact on the mental health of children and youth (disaggregated by gender).
  - a. What have been the coping mechanisms for the negative impact of mental health? Do children and youth adopt a similar coping mechanism?
8. How do you think the Sports for Protection project can increase the competence of the community, particularly children, to understand and respond to climate change? What are the active elements in the project addressed at increasing awareness and knowledge on climate change?

## Migration and its Impact

1. How frequent or ubiquitous is the migration in 24 South Parganas, especially in the two blocks that you are operating in? How it has changed over the past 10 years and what are the key reasons for the same?
  - a. Probe for the key migration destinations for the community members, main types of jobs that the migrants pick up at the destination corridors, and seasonality of migration, if any.
  - b. How do people usually choose to migrate? Probe if there are existing networks/individuals through which they migrate or if they migrate on their own.
  - c. Probe for who all in the household migrate. Do women and children migrate as well?
  - d. As per your observation, is there any localized solution to reduce the trend of migration or make it safe?
2. What have been the key reasons for migration in the district? Probe how climate change has contributed to this.
  - a. How has migration affected the socio-economic conditions of the communities? Probe how migration impacted the quality of life, and education facilities for women, youth, and children.
  - b. How attracted children and youth are to migration? What are the key reasons for this attraction?
  - c. Can you site some first-hand experience of villagers (can be positive or negative) who have migrated in past

- d. Are there incidents where children and youth have migrated without the knowledge of the parents/adults? How has the community/stakeholders responded to such incidents?
3. In general, how are migrants treated at the destination corridors? Have you ever come across any cases of exploitation and abuse at the destination corridors?
  - a. Specifically, how children and youth are treated at the destination corridors? Have you come across any news of them being ill-treated?
  - b. Do they express any expectation which may be helpful and safer if they are bound to migrate
4. Are there successful models or practices that promote positive and holistic re/integration of migrant children and youth at the destination/back to the community?
5. How do you think the Sports for Protection project can increase the competence of the community, particularly children, to understand and be aware of unsafe migration or mitigate climate change risks? According to you, what is the impact pathway to attain this?

## **Program Integration with the government stakeholders and initiatives**

1. How does the program form synergy with government priorities and policies? Is there any plan to engage in policy advocacy and promoting the replication of good practices through systemic integration?
2. What is the level of engagement with local community leaders and gram panchayat in the program? Please elaborate on engagement strategies and areas.
3. What is the level of engagement with district officials during the program? Who are the key stakeholders and the nature of engagement? Please elaborate on engagement strategies and areas.
4. What is the level of engagement with state officials during the program? Who are the key stakeholders and the nature of engagement? Please elaborate on engagement strategies and areas.
5. How the overall engagement strategies at the community, block, district, and state level is similar and different from Phase I of the program? What are the key learnings emerging out of Phase I that have informed the Phase II activities at the systemic level?
6. Please elucidate the role and expectations of the community (various stakeholders) in addressing the issues and promoting the good practices conceptualized under this project? What is the sustainability plan?
7. How does the project seek to create lasting change, such that, even after the project ends, the activities (such as Kabaddi) and the impact remains.

## Annexure III – Terms of Reference

### Project Title: Kabaddi - Youth Empowerment through Sport in West Bengal

#### Terms of Reference – Process Evaluation

#### **I. About Terre Des Hommes**

Terre des hommes (Tdh) aims to enhance the rights and develop the resilience of children and young people who are exposed to risks and face difficulties in accessing essential services around the world. Working in the areas of health, migration and access to justice, our teams both address issues directly and train other people and organisations to do so, in order to strengthen systems in a sustainable way. We take an inclusive, localised approach to create lasting solutions to the challenges children and their communities face and, by working together with them, we bring meaningful change to their lives.

#### **II. About the Project:**

In 2018-19, the Sports for Empowerment methodology developed by Tdh in collaboration United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Olympic Refugee Foundation (ORF), was contextualised to the Indian realities to develop the Kabaddi for Empowerment methodology with the objective of using Kabaddi as a sport to promote and ensure safe migration and children's access to essential support networks by espousing self-efficacy. From 2019-22, Praajak and Tdh piloted this methodology in three districts of West Bengal, namely Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur with the aim of building agency and safe and supportive space for adolescent and young people, at risk/affected by unsafe migration in migrant communities, to meaningfully participate in order to achieve various protection outcomes such as social cohesion, inclusion and psycho-social wellbeing.

Based on the learnings, the project was scaled to respond to the child protection crisis in the climate distressed regions of Sundarbans to embed child centred climate change adaptation. A recent study undertaken by Tdh in collaboration with SaciWaters revealed the close connection between the impact of climate change and child protection. It was found that there were widespread incidences of labor migration among households in the Sundarbans with a large number of children being deprived of their basic rights, increasing their vulnerability to various forms of abuse and exploitation.

Based on these findings, the project aims to apply the same methodology to build resilience of children and youth in order to promote and ensure safer migration. It is based on the understanding that children are much more than passive victims of climate change – they are powerful agents of change, active at all levels, from the community, national, to international arenas. With access to knowledge and skills development, children can make a strong contribution to risk reduction, adaptation and building the resilience of their communities. Engaging and empowering children today lays the foundations for a culture of safety, risk management, and environmental sustainability. Climate change and risk reduction education helps increase the adaptive<sup>16</sup> capacity of children and their communities, fosters environmental stewardship, and

---

<sup>16</sup> The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines “adaptation” to climate change as “an adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.” In other words, ‘adaptation’ is any spontaneous or planned action taken to cope with the impacts of, or reduce vulnerability to, climate change.

contributes to effective adaptation actions. Increasing children's understanding of the risks of climate change empowers them to influence decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing.

In the current phase of the project, Tdh aims to reach 900 girls and 450 boys aged 12-18 at risk of or affected by migration in two blocks of Sundarbans namely Patharpratima and Gosaba. It also seeks to espouse leadership among the 160 young leaders capacitated during the previous phase of the project in Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri to act as advocates of change within their community and promote safe migration and access to essential support networks.

### III. Project Profile:

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Kabaddi - Youth Empowerment through Sport in West Bengal</b>
<b>Aim</b>	To empower children and young people, particularly girls, at risk of/affected by unsafe migration to participate through sports in a more protective and inclusive community around them, reducing their risk of further unsafe migration.
<b>Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. After three years, children and young people who are at risk or affected by unsafe migration will be empowered to claim their rights and challenge harmful gender-based practices.</li> <li>5. After three years, families will help children and young people at risk of migration or affected by migration to exercise their rights.</li> <li>6. After three years, formal and informal actors are supporting children and young people from migrant families, especially victims of sexual abuse and exploitation</li> </ol>
<b>Location</b>	Patharpratima Gosaba Malda Siliguri Berhampur
<b>Project Period</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2025 in Malda, Siliguri, Berhampur 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2023 onwards in Patharpratima Project yet to commence in Gosaba (Proposed inception date: Early 2024)
<b>Total Outreach</b>	600 girls and 300 boys aged 12-18 years, 900 family members in Patharpratima and Gosaba, South 24 Parganas 160 young leaders at Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur
<b>Implementing Partner</b>	Praajak Development Society

### IV. Study Objectives

The mid-line study of the project aims to enhance a contextualised understanding of the child protection challenges and vulnerabilities from a multi-stakeholder lens in the project intervention areas of Sundarbans and provide a deeper and nuanced understanding of project outcomes in Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur.

The key objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the existing vulnerabilities and coping capacities of children and young people, with an intentional gendered lens, in Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of Sundarbans in West Bengal

2. To understand the coping and adaptive capacities of families in climate distressed and disaster-prone regions of Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of Sundarbans.
3. To identify and explore the availability and accessibility of services, schemes and support systems for children and families in Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of Sundarbans.
4. To map the sustainability of project interventions with young leaders in Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri and identify the key challenges and strengths of the project in creating lasting impact
5. To mainstream the voices of children, families and stakeholders in shaping future project implementation and learnings

## **V. Scope of Work**

### **A. Study Design**

The evaluation will be a convergent parallel mixed research study that will combine the qualities of qualitative and quantitative paradigms in an exploratory study design to understand the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of children and their environment in climate distressed regions of Sundarbans, from a socio-ecological lens as well as explore the impact created by the intervention in the previous locations of implementation (Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur). Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected and interpreted simultaneously to enrich the findings.

### **B. Study Location**

The study will cover the project's four geographical districts in West Bengal- namely South 24 Parganas (particularly Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks), Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur.

- Patharpratima and Gosaba: Blocks that are highly/very highly exposed to climate change have a high percentage of households (more than 60%) that migrate, while those that are lowly exposed to climate (less than 50% of households) have a lower incidence of migration. Based on these findings, two climate-vulnerable blocks in the Sundarbans region i.e. Patharpratima, and Gosaba have been identified in order to promote and ensure safe migration and access to essential support networks. The implementation has already started in the Patharpratima block, which is the focus area of implementation during the first year. In the second year, the project is set to also move to the Gosaba Block, where we are planning to start the activities shortly.
- Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri: 160 youth leaders from Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur supported in previous editions of the program are also part of this intervention to capacitate them further as young advocates of change.

The key stakeholders to be included, with their expected level of participation in the study, is mentioned below:

#### **INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER**

1. Tdh's Child Protection Program Team: High Participation
2. Prajak (Project implementing partner): High Participation

#### **EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

##### ***Primary***

3. Children and Young adults at risk of unsafe migration in climate distressed regions of Sundarbans: High Participation

4. Families of children in the Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of South 24 Parganas (Sundarbans): High Participation
5. Youth leaders in Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur: High Participation

### **Secondary**

The consultant/agency is also required to contact representatives from the various departments for KIIs. Mentioned below is an exhaustive list:

1. State Level
  - West Bengal State Disaster Management Authority
  - Department of Child Rights and Trafficking
  - State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
2. District Level
  - Office of District Magistrate
  - District Child Protection Officer
  - Chief Medical Health Officer
  - District Social Welfare Officer
  - District Education Officer
  - Deputy Labour Commissioner
  - District Youth Officer
  - District Sports Association
  - Officer of Special Juvenile Police Unit
  - Child Welfare Committee
3. Block Level
  - Block Medical Health Officer
  - Block Development Officer
  - CDPO
  - Sabhapati
  - Karmadhyakhya – Shishu Unnyon Sthayee Committee
  - Assistant Labour Commissioner Canning
  - Assistant Labour Commissioner Kakdwip
  - Block Youth Officer
  - Child Welfare Police Officer
4. Village Level
  - Pradhan of Panchayat
  - ICDS Supervisor
  - ANM
  - Sanchalika Nari O Shishu Unnyon Upa Samiti
  - School Teachers

### **C. Data Collection Methods**

1. **Desk Review:** Review of existing secondary information and reports relevant to the project to be done. This includes Project proposal, Log Frame, theory of change, inception reports, evaluations, relevant national policies, district and state level relevant literature and data, and other documents



as found necessary for the study.

- 2. Primary data collection:** Quantitative and Qualitative approaches and tools (such as focus group discussions and key informant interviews, direct observation, as well as participatory exercises) are to be used to collect information:

- a. Survey: *To be employed in South 24 Parganas only-*** This will include surveys with children as well as households (families).
  - **With Children:** The survey with children will focus on exploring their key needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities to understand, adapt and respond to climate change and disasters.
  - **With Families:** For households, the survey focus will be to understand the impact of climate change at the family level, their perceptions towards including children's voices in major decisions and gauge their current resources to cope and adopt in the disaster prone and climate distressed regions.
- b. Key Informant Interviews: *To be employed in South 24 Parganas only-*** With community and government actors (as mentioned in the section above) to generate insights about the relevant policies, their approach towards child participation in climate change response and other child safeguarding measures.
- c. Focus-Group Discussions: *To be employed in South 24 Parganas and Malda.***
  - **With children and adolescents in Patharpratima and Gosaba (South 24 Parganas)-** FGDs with children and youth groups in Patharpratima and Gosaba blocks of South 24 Parganas to gauge their collective understanding of the impact of climate crisis and other risks on themselves and the community, their expectations from stakeholders and how they see their role manifesting as part of their solutions.
  - **With youth leaders in Malda:** In Malda, the focus group discussions with the youth leaders will aim to understand how they apply their skills and competencies developed through project activities to address complex problems, their level of activeness and the sustainability of the intervention.
- d. Personal Interviews: *To be employed with youth leaders in Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri only-*** The interviews will aim to capture how youth leaders understand the impact of the project and the changes they see within themselves and the community.

#### **Modus Operandi of Data Collection**

For data collection, interviewers/enumerators will be required to travel and make field visits in South 24 Parganas and Malda. For the personal interviews in Berhampur and Siliguri with youth leaders, virtual video calls and/ or telephonic calls will be organised. For KII, Tdh/Praajak can assist the consultant/agency in setting up an appointment in case of any major challenge. The list of villages to be covered in Patharpratima and Gosaba will be provided by Tdh.

Tools of data collection will be developed by the consultant/agency in consultation with Tdh and Praajak, and the feedback of all stakeholders must be duly incorporated.

#### **D. Sampling Plan**

The sample for the quantitative survey will be drawn from the 900 children and young people (600 girls and 300 boys) and the 900 families across the two locations. Thus, 270 children and young people and 270 households need to be covered under the survey, maintaining a confidence level of 95% with a 5% margin of error in South 24 Parganas. The division of the sample size between the two locations will be decided subsequently by the Consultant/agency in consultation with Tdh and Praajak. Four FGDs each need to be conducted in both the locations with 8 to 10 members. Age-appropriate participant selection and separate FGDs for both boys and girls need to be conducted to avoid power usurpation within the group.

Among the 160 youth leaders in the Malda, Berhampur and Siliguri, 30-35 youth leaders will to be included in the study through two in-person FGDs in Malda (8 to 10 members each) and telephonic interviews.

### **E. Data Analysis Plan**

Quantitative data will be collected on mobile data collection software such as Kobo Toolbox and analysed on relevant software (SPSS or STATA). For qualitative data analysis, the interviewers are required to analyse recurring themes, quotes appropriately. Enumerators must be trained on how to collect data on field. A combined analysis will be done for the collected data to allow program level conclusions to be drawn.

### **F. Ethical considerations:**

- Tdh requires a 'do no harm to children' and 'no harm to communities' as a central theme of the baseline. This is to be interwoven into all aspects of the baseline.
- A responsible authority from the agency must sign the Terre des hommes Child Safeguarding Policy and Global Code of Conduct and be willing to adhere to its principles and expected practices. If a breach of the policy or code of conduct takes place the consultancy will be terminated immediately without any financial burden on Tdh.
- Informed consent should be given before participating in a study, and the participants should be able to withdraw at any moment. Respondents should be explained how the study findings are likely to be used. They must then be asked and must be free to choose. Their choices must be clearly recorded and always kept with their testimony and/or the relevant media. In case of children, the consent of the family as well as the child must be taken.
- If it is agreed that all or any part of a participant's testimony should be confidential, then that commitment must be clearly recorded and respected. If the testimony is to be made anonymous, or used with a false name, make sure that any other identifying details are also changed.
- The agency must maintain data security and provide a data security plan.
- During the survey, any serious protection concern or cases of children or family in high risk should be reported to Tdh. Participants to the survey should be enabled to contact Tdh team or the supervisor of the survey to report any major issue.
- The database must be deleted post report finalisation and after sharing of the raw data with Tdh.
- Personal data and photographs of children should not be collected.
- No support, benefit or compensation should be promised to the respondent at the time of data collection.

## **VI. Research Questions and Indicators**

As per OECD evaluation criterion, the evaluation is intended to be guided by the following questions:

**1. Relevance:** *extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' needs and priorities.*

- What are the major vulnerabilities, risks and child protection concerns of children and young people in Sundarbans?
- To what extent do children, youths and families affected by climate induced migration understand these associated risks?
- Does the project meet the expectations and needs of children, youth, and families?
- What is the impact of climate change and disasters on children's mental health and wellbeing?
- What are the coping capacities and support systems available to children and youth in the face of climate crisis?
- How are families responding to the challenges posed by the climate change and are children's voices considered in their coping mechanisms?
- What are the services, schemes, and networks available and accessible to families and communities? What is their level of awareness and utilisation of these?
- Do children have access to safe spaces where they can express themselves freely?

**1. Effectiveness:** *extent to which the project is achieving or is in track to achieve its objectives.*

- To what extent is the project addressing the larger challenge of unsafe migration in the community?
- How can the project further espouse leadership, agency and self-efficacy among children and young adults?
- To what extent has the project assisted youth leaders to enhance their skills, knowledge and capacities in Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur?
- What are the knowledge and capacities needed for children, as well as the resources needed to enable them to play an active role in strengthening the wellbeing pillars? (As per Tdh's MHPSS self-diagnostic toolkit)

**2. Efficiency:** *extent to which the interventions are being delivered in an economic and timely way.*

- Who are the essential stakeholders that influence child protection within the defined geographies?
- Are the roles and accountabilities of all stakeholders (implementing partners, front line workers, government stakeholders) clearly defined? What is the extent of collaboration and convergence between them?
- Who are the positive and negative influencers of child protection in climate distressed regions (To undertake a stakeholder analysis)

**3. Impact:** *extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.*

- To what extent has the project espoused young leaders to realise their power and agency in Malda, Siliguri and Berhampur?
- What are the other tools that can be adopted to further strengthen and capacitate youth leaders so that they can become agents of change and role models to other children in vulnerable situations?
- How can an alliance of youth leaders be facilitated across geographies to champion child centred approaches to prevent unsafe migration?
- What are the risks emerging from the project implementation?

- 4. Gender Mainstreaming:** *extent to which interventions are gender aware and transformative.*
  - What are the gendered implications of the climate crisis on child protection?
  - To what extent does the project adopt a gender transformative lens in achieving its objectives?
  - To what extent is the project addressing the needs of the young girls, non-binary and trans persons?
- 5. Sustainability:** *extent to which the positive effects of the intervention are likely to continue.*
  - What is the current status of government and community will to address child centred climate resiliency and how can the project further strengthen these?
  - What is the current mechanism of disaster response planning and what is the scope of integrating a child centricity in the local disaster response and relief framework?
- 6. Coherence:** *compatibility of the intervention with state policies.*
  - To what extent is the project aligned with state government policy commitments on climate change and Mission Vatsalaya scheme?

## **VII. Tasks and Outputs**

1. An inception meeting with Tdh and Praajak to bring clarity to roles and responsibilities, project log frame and hand over study resources.
2. Inception prep including sharpening methodology, sampling approach, data collection plan and translation of tools in Bengali (if required)
3. Tool development and finalisation
4. Development of research instrument into online survey form
5. Recruitment and training of data collectors/enumerators with required devices. Training sessions will be organised in consultation with Tdh and Praajak.
6. Submission of detailed data collection roll out plan and travel plan to Tdh and Praajak
7. Weekly survey status reporting and data monitoring on field to ensure quality assurance.
8. The consultant will be required to seek appointments from participants for conducting interviews and provide a short introduction to the study.
9. Data analysis and draft study report to be shared with Tdh and Praajak for feedback along with the cleaned datasets.
10. Final study report along with summary report to be submitted.
11. Dissemination of major findings

## **VIII. Composition of the Evaluation Team**

1. The consultant/agency must ensure gender balance in their team of enumerators/interviewers.
2. Specialists from the field of gender, mental health and psychosocial support, and child protection must be involved in tool development and data analysis.
3. Team members must be trained on child safeguarding and ethical data collection, analysis and use, before entering the field.

## **IX. Deliverables**

1. **Tool Development** and finalisation
2. **Work Plan** with field travel plan and timeline
3. **Draft report** of the study for the feedback and comments from Tdh/Praajak.
4. **Presentation on the main findings** of the assessment
5. **Final Study report** (with clear consolidation of findings and recommendations)
6. **Summary version** of the final report

Note- Tdh branding guidelines need to be adhered while designing the final report.

## **X. Consultancy Period**

The consultancy will be for 21 days including the travel days.

## **XI. Ownership and Disclosure of Data/Information**

All documents, tools, design, data and information shall be treated as confidential and shall not, without the written approval of Tdh, be made available to any third party. In addition, the consultant/agency formally undertakes not to disclose any parts of the confidential information and data. The utilization of the report is solely at the decision and discretion of Tdh. All the documents containing both raw data/materials provided by Tdh and Praajak and final report, both soft and hard copies are to be returned to Tdh and Praajak upon completion of the assignment. All documentation and reports written as, and as a result of the research or otherwise related to it, shall remain the property of Tdh and Praajak. No part of the report shall be reproduced except with the prior, expressed and specific written permission of Tdh.

## **XII. Credentials of the consultancy agency**

We are looking for a consultancy agency having a team with the following skills and qualifications:

1. Demonstrable research expertise on child protection, migration, and climate change
2. Experience in managing and coordinating large scale studies, delivering agreed outputs on time and on budget.
3. Experience in data collection and analysis using participatory methodologies.
4. Excellent and demonstrated understanding of ethical issues in research.
5. Ability to work with communities in relevant local languages (Bengali)
6. Strong quantitative and qualitative analysis skills and previous experience using statistical analysis software (SPSS, Stata).
7. Ability to write high quality, clear, concise reports in English.

## **XIII. Application process and timeline**

Interested individuals and companies are invited to submit the following application documents:

Expression of interest outlining how the consultant(s) meets the selection criteria and their understanding of the ToR and methodology.

1. Copy of profile of the agency, including the CVs of the key team members who will lead the study.
2. Two recent example of similar study report written by the applicant consultant/agency.
3. Financial proposal detailing itemized fees, data collection and administrative costs.
4. Only short-listed agencies will be contacted for an interview.

**Annex 1: Report Format (The report should be maximum of 25-30 pages; and within 40 pages including annexes described below)**

1. Title page
2. Contents page
3. List of abbreviations and acronyms
4. Executive Summary (maximum 2 pages, clearly summarising the assessment and key findings in accessible language)
5. Background (maximum 2 pages on the context of the intervention and project objectives)
6. Methodology (maximum 2 pages detailing what data was collected, how it was collected and by whom, what the sample size was, details of control groups used, any possible limitations to the assessment etc.)
7. Findings and analysis (maximum 15-20 pages. The Findings section should also include a summary table showing updated information on the study indicators mentioned above)
8. Recommendations (maximum 2 pages, lessons and recommendations must be clearly related to the evidence given in the Findings section of the report)
9. Annexes in the Report. These might include- a. Itinerary/ schedule b. List of organisations/stakeholders consulted c. References / list of documents reviewed d. Sample of all data collection tools used (e.g. questionnaires, semi-structured interview questions) e. Full data tables of all quantitative results (if appropriate and if not all included in main report) f. Additional maps, photos or more detailed case studies if available

Note: The raw data (quantitative data files, transcripts of Interviews / FGDs etc.) should also be submitted to Tdh for reference and future use.