NEED ANALYSIS REPORT OF
ART EDUCATION
IN GRAM PANCHAYAT LIBRARIES

The National Gallery of Modern Art is India's premier art institution for modern and contemporary Indian art. The Bengaluru NGMA was set up in 2009. It is run and administered as a subordinate office of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. It is one of the three National Galleries of Modern Art - the other two being in Delhi and Mumbai.

The collection of NGMA mainly comprises of paintings, sculptures, graphic prints, and examples of early photography in India which showcased the historical development of modern art in India. In addition to permanent display of the paintings and sculptures, NGMA also showcases national and international exhibitions regularly.

Established in 2015 and headquartered in Bengaluru, India, ReReeti Foundation is a pioneering organisation dedicated to transforming museums in India into vibrant hubs of learning, delight, and meaningful engagement for all. Guided by the core principles of inclusivity and participatory development, the interdisciplinary team collaborates closely with cultural organisations to understand their unique needs and develop customised solutions that maximise their impact.

The department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR), Government of Karnataka, has taken up the revitalisation of rural public libraries as a flagship programme.

Through this, the department is energising Gram Panchayat Arivu Kendras in Karnataka into spaces for multi-disciplinary and multi-generational learning.

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Introduction

Abstract

This report explores arts literacy in six Gram Panchayat libraries in Anekal, Karnataka. The objective is to assess current arts engagement, identify existing barriers and propose strategies for enhancing arts literacy in Gram Panchayat Libraries. Key findings reveal a significant interest in arts activities among the children, yet highlight challenges such as limited resources, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of trained facilitators. Recommendations emphasise the development of structured arts programmes, training for librarians and fostering partnerships with local artists and organisations to ensure sustainable arts education initiatives.

Background

The current state of Gram Panchayat libraries in Karnataka is a robust network of approximately 5895 libraries that serve as vital community resources.

The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department(RDPR) has focussed on reviving them to bridge the learning gap left by school closures during COVID-19, supporting children's educational recovery and reducing the potential long-term impact on their wellbeing.

Context

Gram Panchayat libraries are fundamental to the educational landscape in rural India, providing not only access to books but also serving as community hubs for learning and cultural engagement. These libraries have the potential to play a transformative role in their communities by facilitating arts-based activities that foster creativity and critical thinking.

In a country where access to quality education and artistic resources remains uneven, these libraries can bridge significant gaps, particularly in underserved areas. This report focusses on six panchayat libraries in Anekal Taluk, Karnataka, namely Handenahalli, Yamare, Dommasandra, Neriga, Muglur, and Bidaraguppe.

The study aims to

- **Assess** the current state of arts engagements in Gram Panchayat libraries.

- **Identify** existing barriers to arts education.

- **Propose** actionable insights and strategies to enhance and sustain arts literacy.
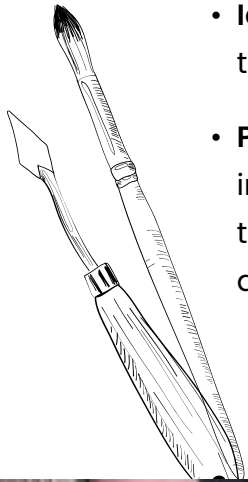
Focus on Visual Arts

The arts encompass a broad spectrum of creative disciplines that include visual, performing and literary arts among others. For this research, our focus is on visual arts. Visual arts provide not only an expression of one's creativity but also a unique way of fostering critical thinking, problem-solving and interpersonal skills. It encourages individuals to observe and interpret the world around them.

Approach
& Methodology

Approach

The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of arts engagement in the targeted libraries.

Additionally, the Art Study also incorporated Bloom's Taxonomy of scaffold learning. This approach allowed for a nuanced exploration of both the statistical trends and the personal/lived experiences of community members.

Interviews

Conducted secondary interviews with organisations and individuals working directly with these libraries or in similar art practices within underserved communities. Primary interviews with people involved directly with the library and its working.

Surveys

Distributed to gather baseline, formative and end line assessment data that will inform the current state of arts engagement and barriers to long-term arts education.

Observations

These were carried out in the libraries to assess the physical environment, resource availability and levels of engagement in children during arts-related activities

Art Study

This study was conducted to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a long-term arts programme tailored to the needs of the children in these libraries.

Data collected from a total of 150 participants:

- 6-Librarians from the targeted panchayat libraries.

- 116-Children, from Grades 1 to 12, who frequent these libraries.

- 10-Parents of the children using these libraries.

- 4-Panchayat workers and the Executive Officer of Anekal Taluk.

- 13-Artists, Student Volunteers, Art Educators and Librarians with experience working in underserved communities.

Findings: Interviews & Observations

Findings through Interviews and Observations
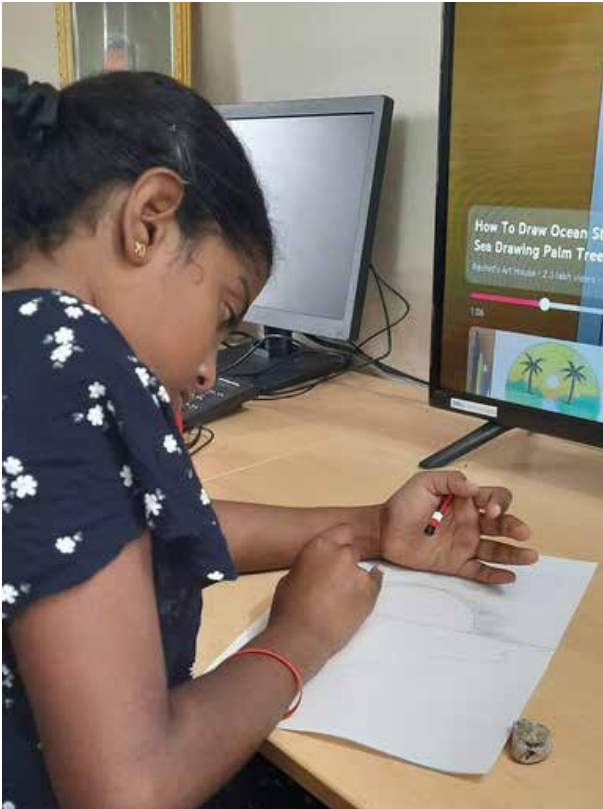
General Library Operations

1. Library hours are from 10 am to 6 pm, with a lunch break from 1 pm to 3 pm. All libraries are closed on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month.

2. The libraries were recently renamed as Arivu Kendra or Knowledge Centres.

3. Libraries predominantly house books in Kannada, with smaller collections in English.

4. These six librarians receive annual training from the Gram Panchayat and quarterly training from Azim Premji University (APU).

Art Engagement

1. Basic art materials such as white sheets, pencils, crayons, paints and colour papers are available.

2. The RDPR circulars suggest art activities, usually focussed on national holidays, often resulting in drawings of national symbols such as flags, peacocks and tigers.

3. Rangoli making remains a popular cultural activity across the libraries, with children creating both traditional and contemporary designs.
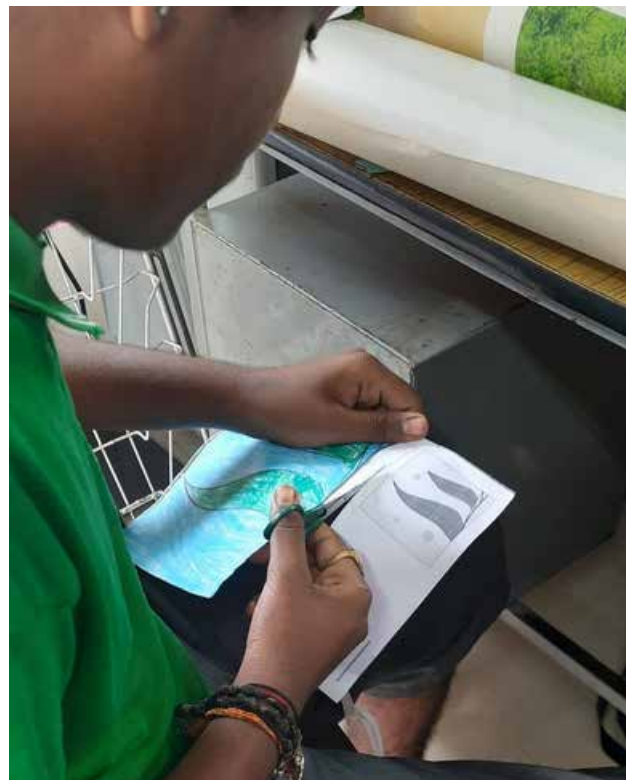
Findings through Interviews and Observations

Community and Cultural Context

Women are often busy with housework and/ or as house help in nearby apartments or as transport support staff for nearby school buses, and men typically work in nearby factories or as daily wage labourers, with some families engaged in traditional weaving within the community. A small minority of men work in private companies or as school teachers.

Libraries observe national holidays through reading sessions, associated books and sometimes cultural dance performances, with children actively participating in these events.

Some libraries benefit from community involvement, with former library users returning as volunteers to support younger children, helping with reading and homework sessions.

Children's Engagement

1. The libraries primarily serve school-going children between ages 5 and 16 years, with peak attendance after school hours.

2. Pratham books featuring animals and birds are particularly popular among children, who use the library for recreational reading and arts activities.

3. Young children frequently explore the library space and digital resources enthusiastically.

Findings through Interviews and Observations

Technology Use

1. Libraries typically offer a few computers, smartphones and television for educational content and interactive learning.

2. While YouTube tutorials and online educational videos are commonly accessed resources, children sometimes use devices primarily for recreational content, including craft tutorials, devotional songs and local entertainment.

3. All libraries are equipped with the Digi Vikasana App for digital resources.
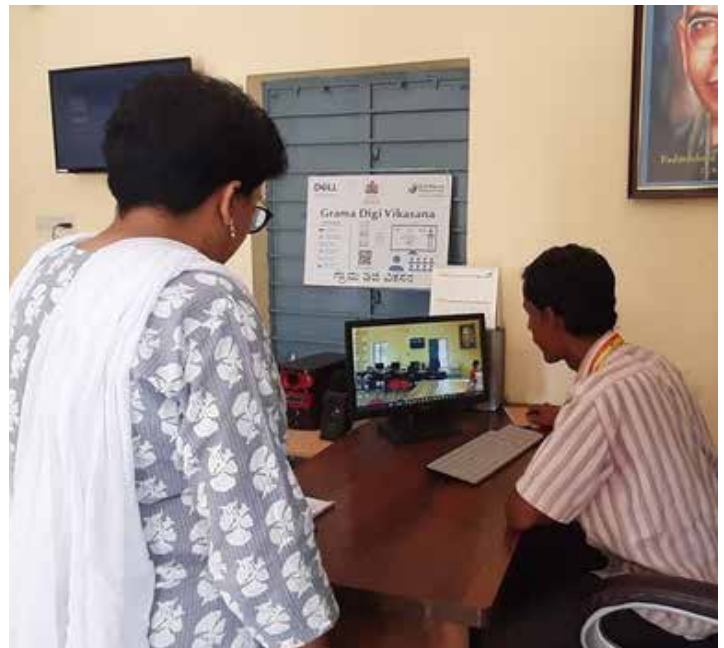
Findings:
Art study & Surveys

Findings through Art Study and Surveys

The Art Study was primarily qualitative, it incorporated Bloom's Taxonomy as a framework for evaluating the impact of arts literacy on participants. This taxonomy guided the development of art activities and assessment criteria to gather comprehensive insights. Rangoli-making is a prominent cultural activity across all libraries. This phase encouraged the exploration of Rangoli-making through traditional materials and non-traditional techniques.

Children aged 6 to 12 explored Rangoli-making through paper cutting and collaborative mural creation.
These forms were selected for their ease of material procurement and potential to build on existing community interest in Rangoli-making. The study's effectiveness was evaluated using Bloom's Taxonomy of scaffold learning and the results documented are on the next page.
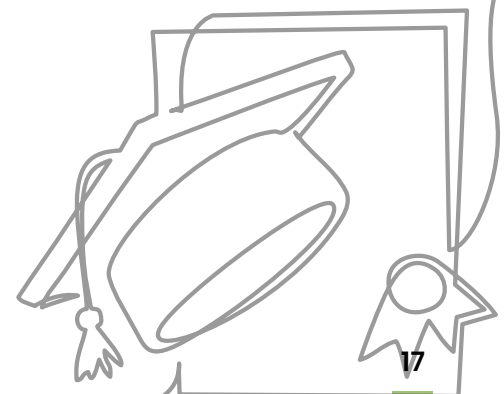
Findings through Art Study and Surveys Figure

BASELINE ASSESSMENT (BEFORE)

Children's demographic information, initial knowledge, skills and attitudes toward art practices.

Feasibility for long-term art education survey

1. Library infrastructure- physical and knowledge.
2. Children behaviours and attitudes toward art.
3. Barriers to arts literacy, (physical, mental, emotional, environmental and social factors).

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT (DURING)

Observational

The children will be observed (based on a checklist) during activities for engagement, creativity, use of techniques and collaboration.

Anecdotal

Anecdotal evidence can provide context for other data collected through the surveys.

Activities enjoyed most, material use, knowledge gained by the children along with self and peer assessment questions.

Artwork survey

END LINE ASSESSMENT (AFTER)
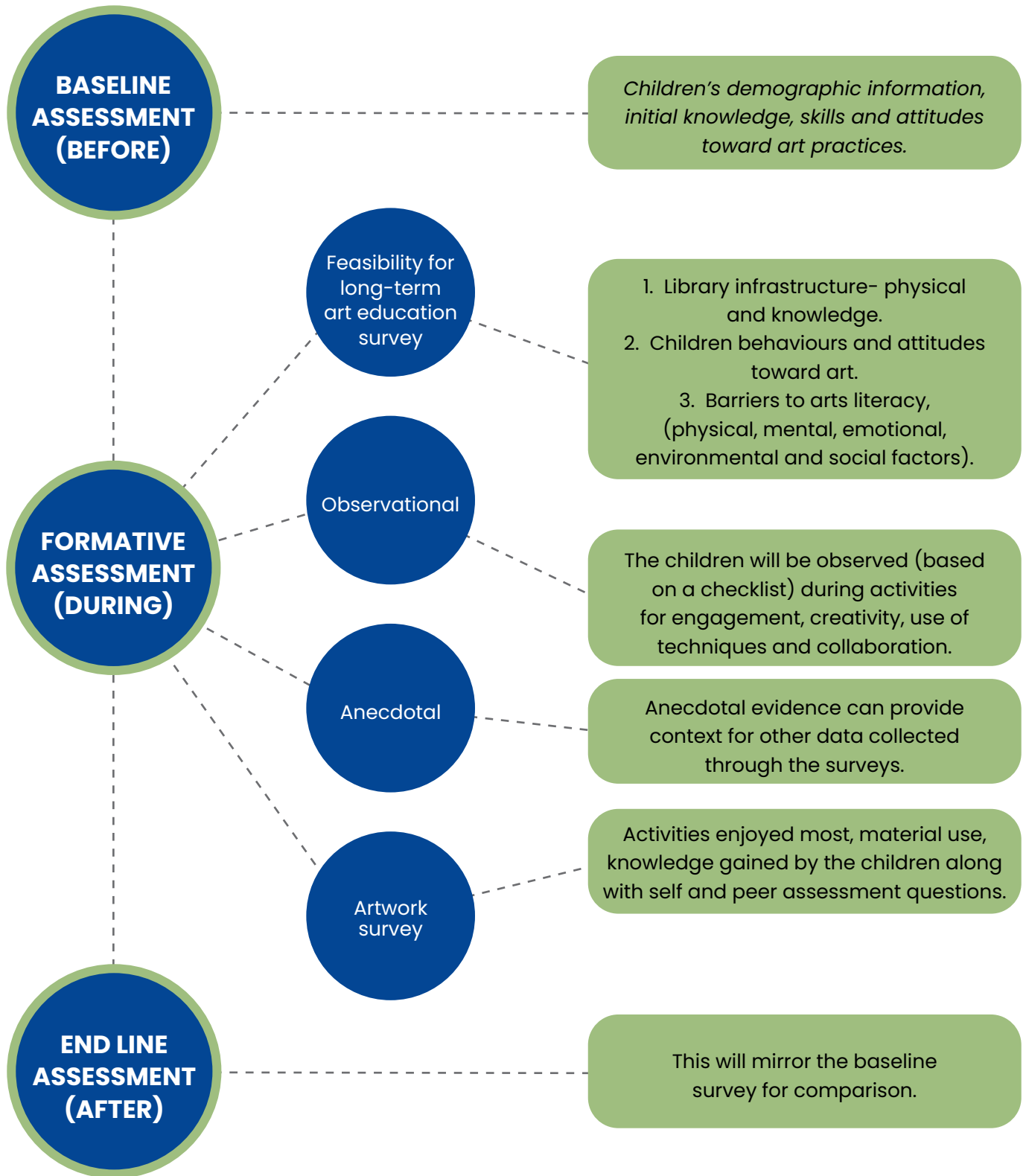
This will mirror the baseline survey for comparison.

Figure 1: Art Study Methodology

Demographics

The group consisted of 116 children aged 5 to 16 years, with a relatively balanced gender distribution: 57 females (49%) and 59 males (51%). The majority of participants, 89 children (77%), were from government schools, while the remaining 27 children (23%) were from private schools.
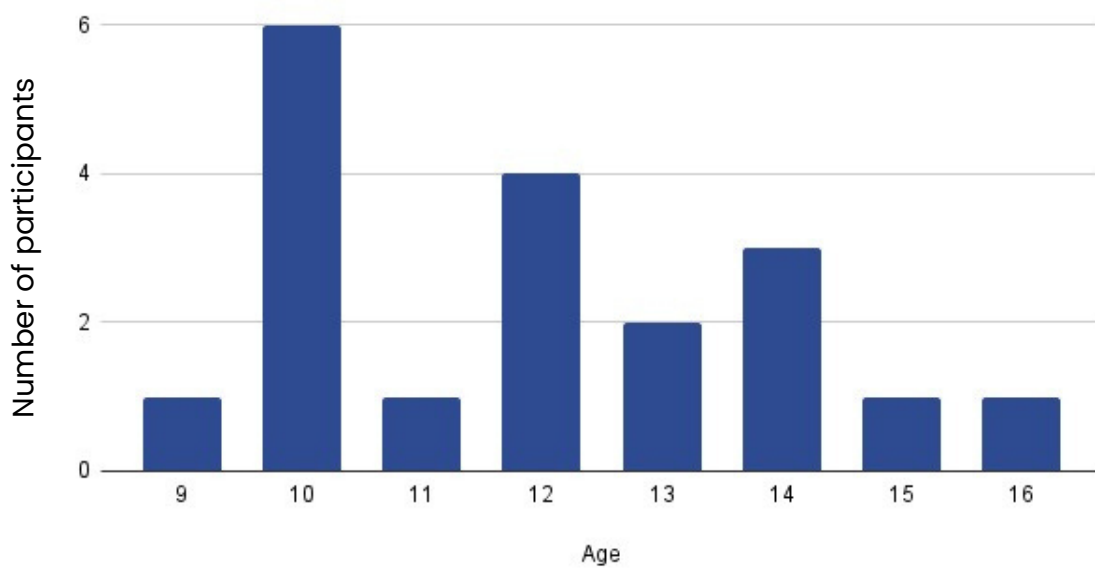

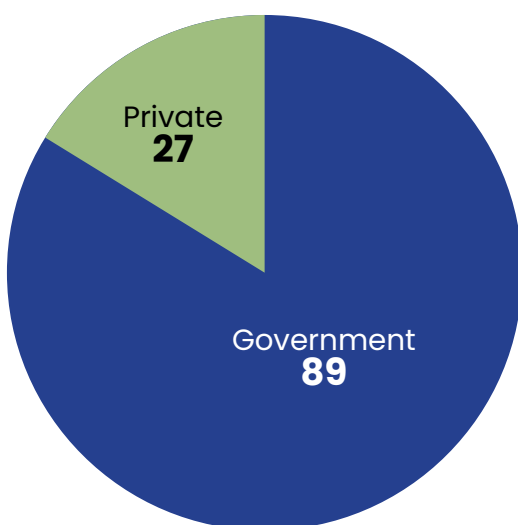Figure 2: Ages of the 116 participating children (5 to 16 years)

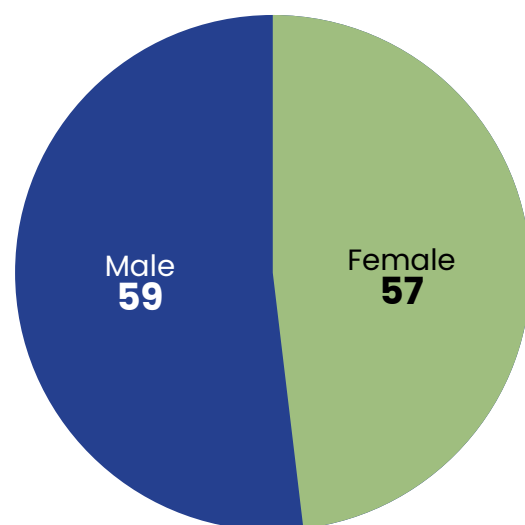Figure 3: Schools of the 116 children

Figure 4: Genders of the 116 children

Baseline Survey

Baseline Survey

This baseline survey assessed children's prior knowledge, skills and attitudes toward art practices. It served as a foundation for the exploration of Rangoli-making through paper cutting and collaborative mural creation.

Prior Knowledge and Skills

The children were first shown posters of diverse artworks in themes of folk, miniature, contemporary, landscape, figurative and abstract. The data reveals that none of the children had seen them, indicating a potential gap in their familiarity with certain art forms.

All 116 participants had experience using basic art materials such as brushes, paint, crayons and color pencils. A smaller number had used recycled materials (91 children, 78%) like cardboard, foil and bottles and natural materials (80 children, 69%) such as leaves and sand. Even fewer had experience with chart paper (8 children, 70%) and clay (6 children, 5%), possibly due to these materials being less commonly accessible or familiar to them. This insight highlights the potential for expanding access to diverse materials and techniques in future art interventions.
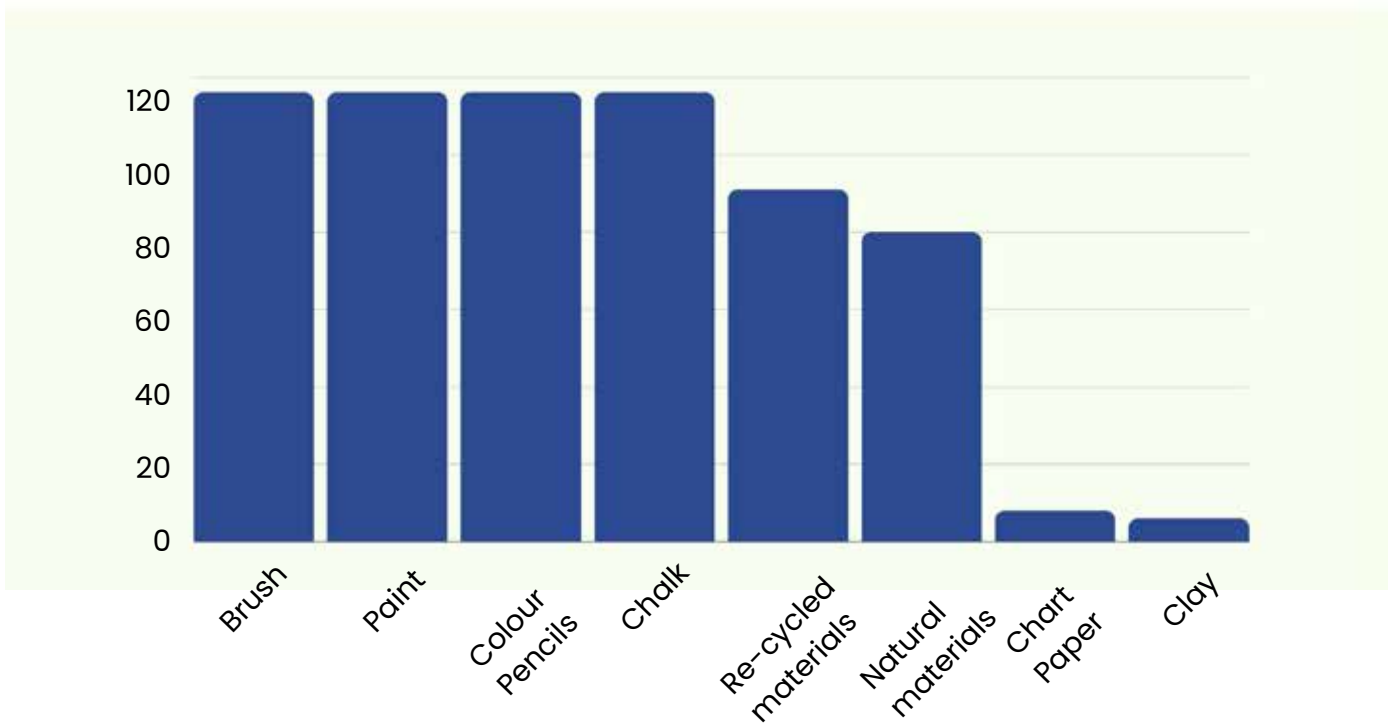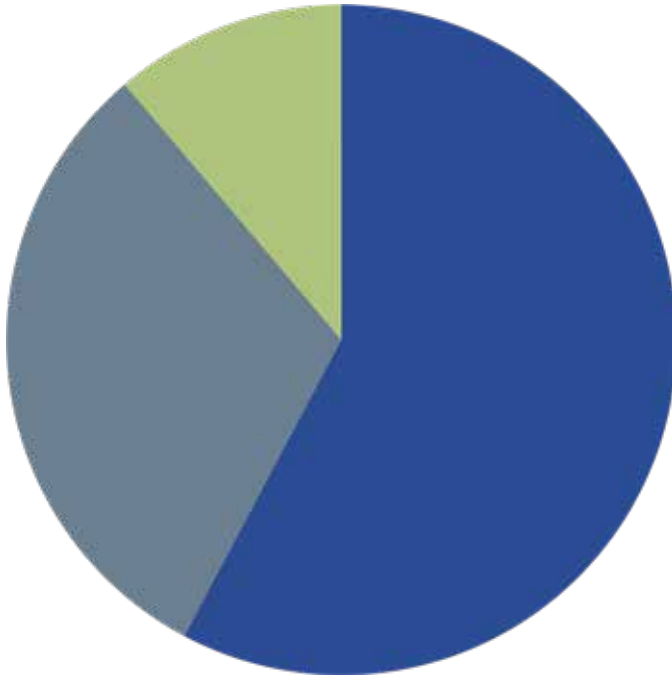

Figure 5: Materials used by the 116 children

Traditional (67)
Traditional designs with dots and other traditional motifs.

Contemporary (36)
Contemporary versions of rangolis, some incorporating drawings of houses and national flags.

Unfamiliar with Rangoli (13)
Unfamiliar or unable to draw any form of rangoli.

Figure 6: Rangoli techniques by the 116 children

Attitudes & Perceptions

This section aimed to understand the children's perspectives on creativity, interest in pursuing artistic activities and their aspirations for art and related engagements.

Many children created art across various spaces, including home, school and the library, with 59 children (50.86%) actively engaging in these environments.

Most children (77, 66.38%) practised art at least once or twice a week, while a few engaged occasionally or as they wished. Group art activities were particularly common, with 88 children (75.86%) participating in them.

Only Library (4)

Home and School (9)

School and Library (10)

Only Home (13)

Only School (21)

Home, School, and Library (59)
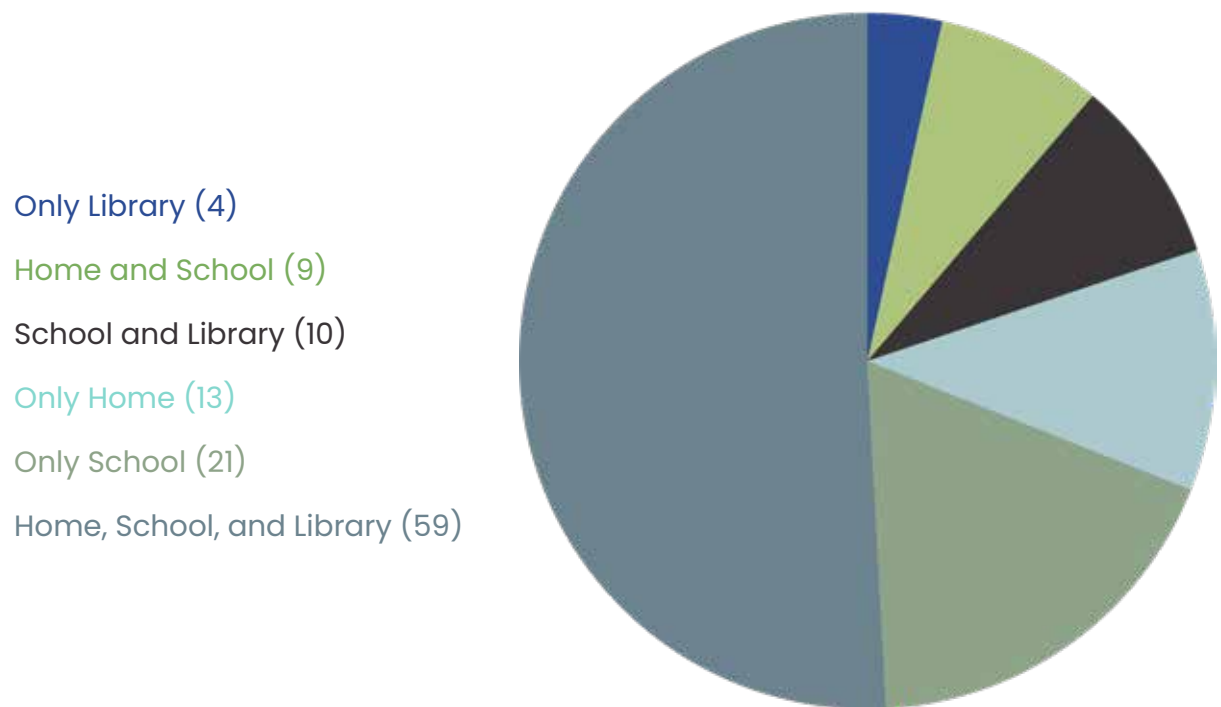
Figure 7: Spaces used by the 116 children to make art

Once or twice a week (77)

As and when they wish (22)

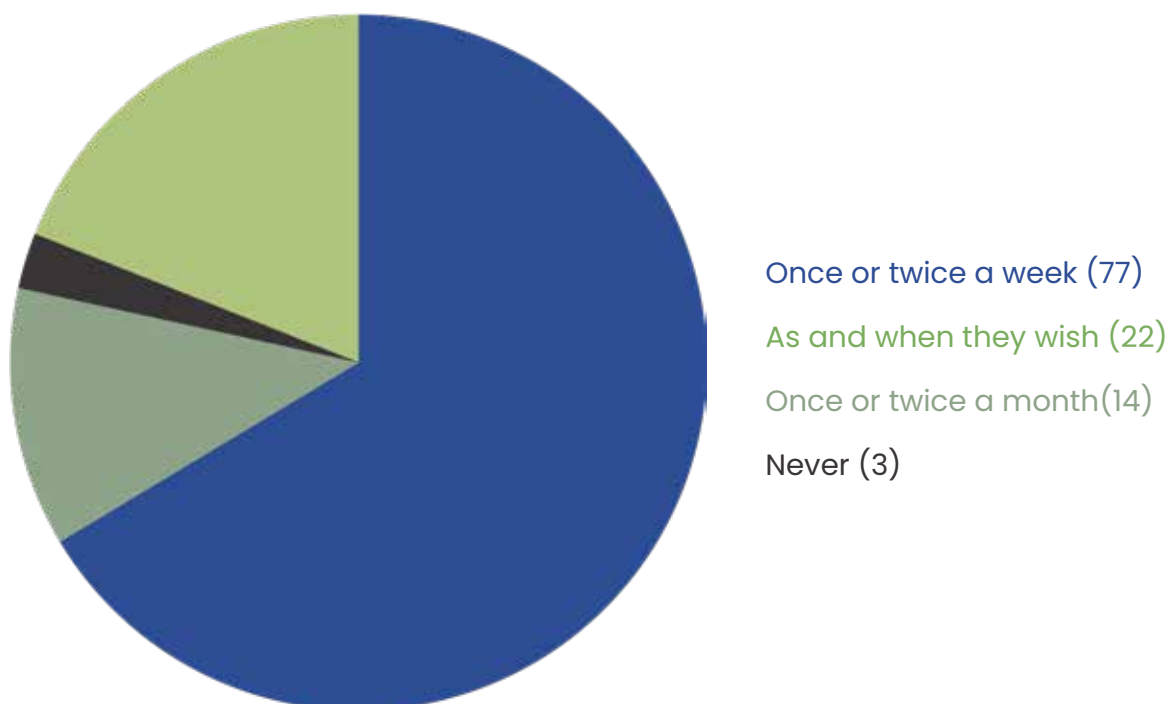Once or twice a month(14)

Never (3)

Figure 8: Frequency of the 116 children practising art

Goals and expectations

This section aimed to understand what the children hope to achieve through their participation in the programme. Rangoli and their drawings were analysed to determine whether they reflect traditional or contemporary styles. This information provides insight into the children's artistic aspirations and their current knowledge.

The children expressed a strong desire to learn new art techniques (77, 46.39%), improve their creativity (64, 38.55%) and connect with local cultural traditions (52, 31.33%). Regarding rangoli, 67 children (40.36%) knew how to draw traditional rangoli, 36 (21.69%) were familiar with contemporary versions and 13 (7.83%) did not know how to draw rangoli.
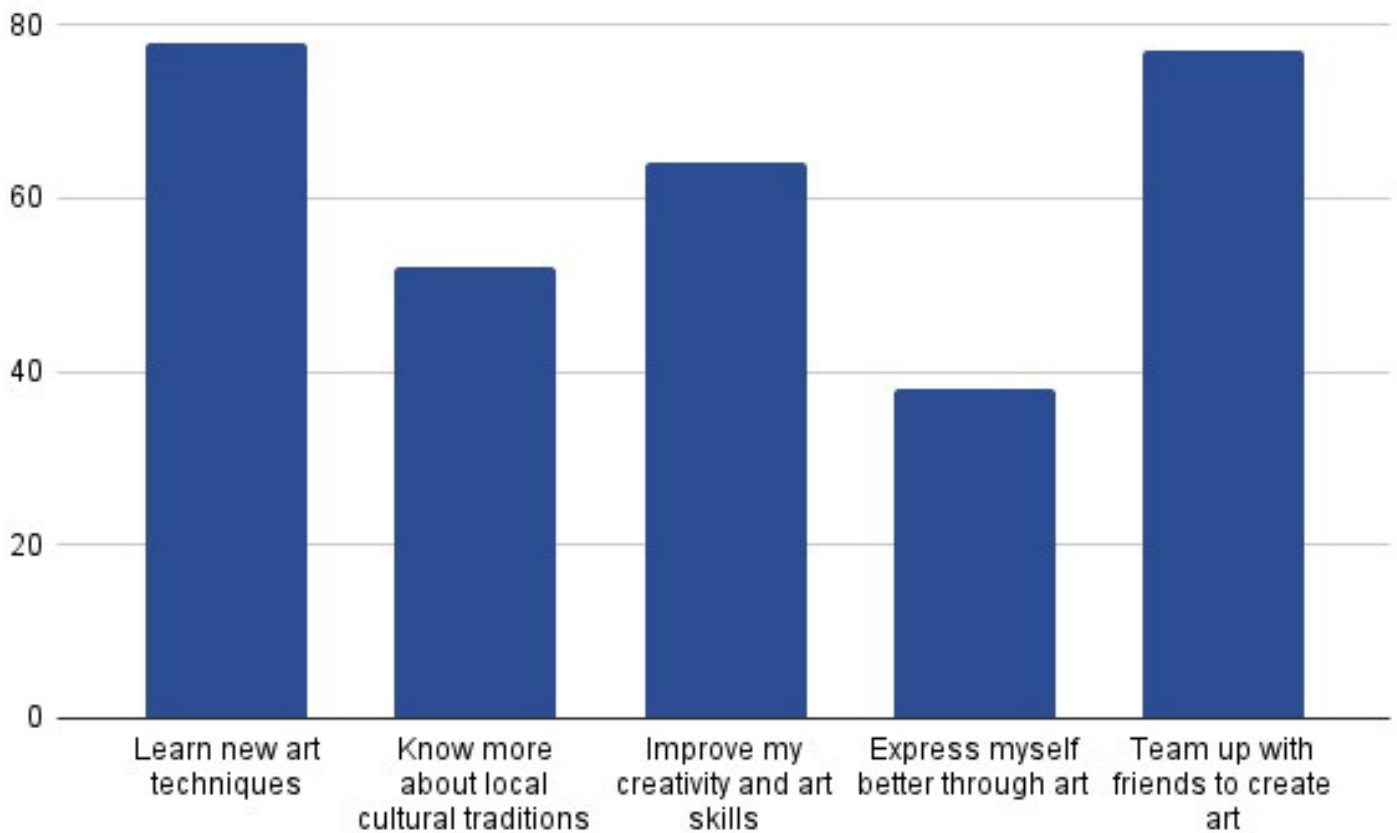

Figure 9: Children's (116) hopes for the art study

Art study & Survey

Art Study and Survey

The Art Study and Survey captured children's reflections on their favourite activities, challenges and peer artwork, exploring preferred materials, feelings during creation and interest in new activities like painting or paper mache. It also gauged overall experiences, new learnings and suggestions for future activities, offering valuable insights into their preferences.

The Art Study and Survey highlights the children's engagement with the programme. Of the 116 participants, 66 children (57%) enjoyed both activities equally, while 16% preferred paper Rangoli (18 children) and 14% the collaborative mural (17 children).

103 children (89%) found the activities easy. Peer interaction was strong, with 112 children (97%) giving feedback on their peers' work.

Regarding materials, 83% (96 children) enjoyed colour paper cutting, 67 (58%) liked white paper drawing and 60 (52%) preferred using crayons.

Emotions during the activities were overwhelmingly positive, with 97 children (84%) feeling happy and 53 (46%) excited.

Interest in future art activities was high: 111 children (96%) were keen on drawing and painting and 105 (91%) expressed eagerness to try clay modeling and paper mache.

Overall, 108 children (93%) rated their experience as perfect 5 and confirmed learning something new. Suggestions for future activities included drama games, sports, painting, origami, clay modeling and rangoli powder, reflecting their enthusiasm for exploring diverse creative pursuits.

Unsure (15)

Collaborative Mural (17)

Paper cut Rangolis (18)

Both (66)
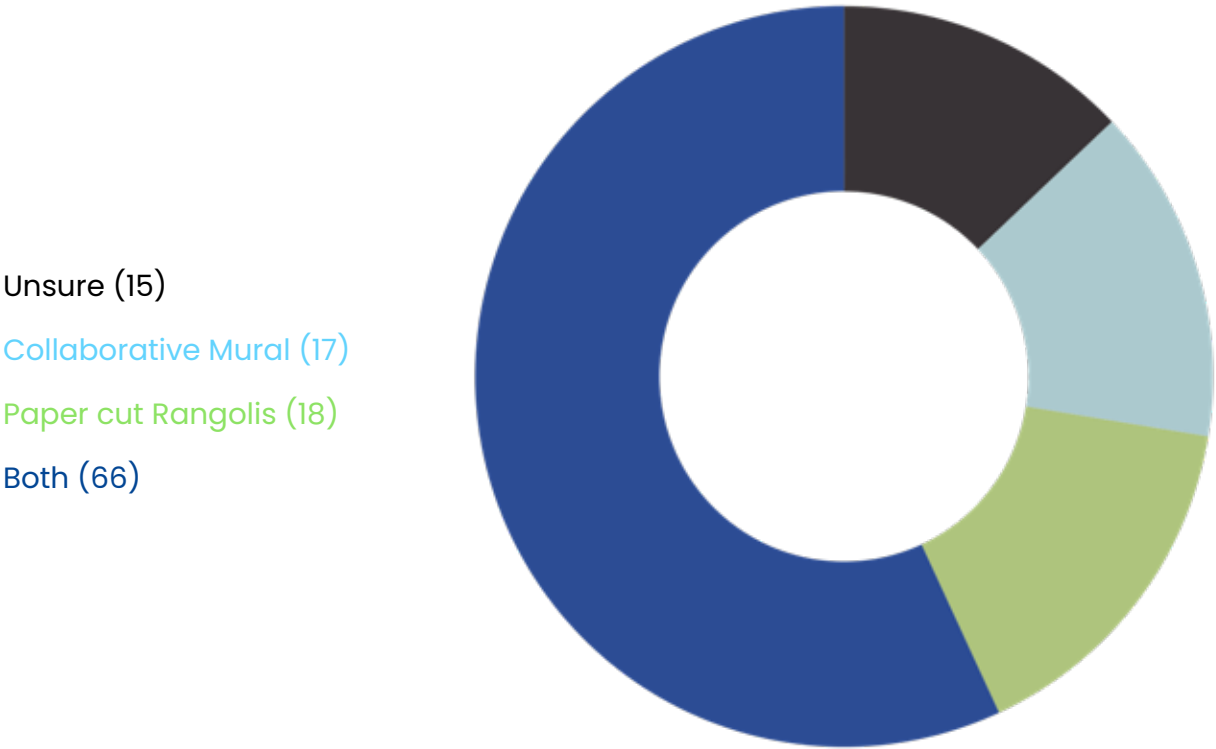
Figure 10: Art activities enjoyed by the 116 children

Happy (97)

Excited (53)

Confused (7)

Bored (4)
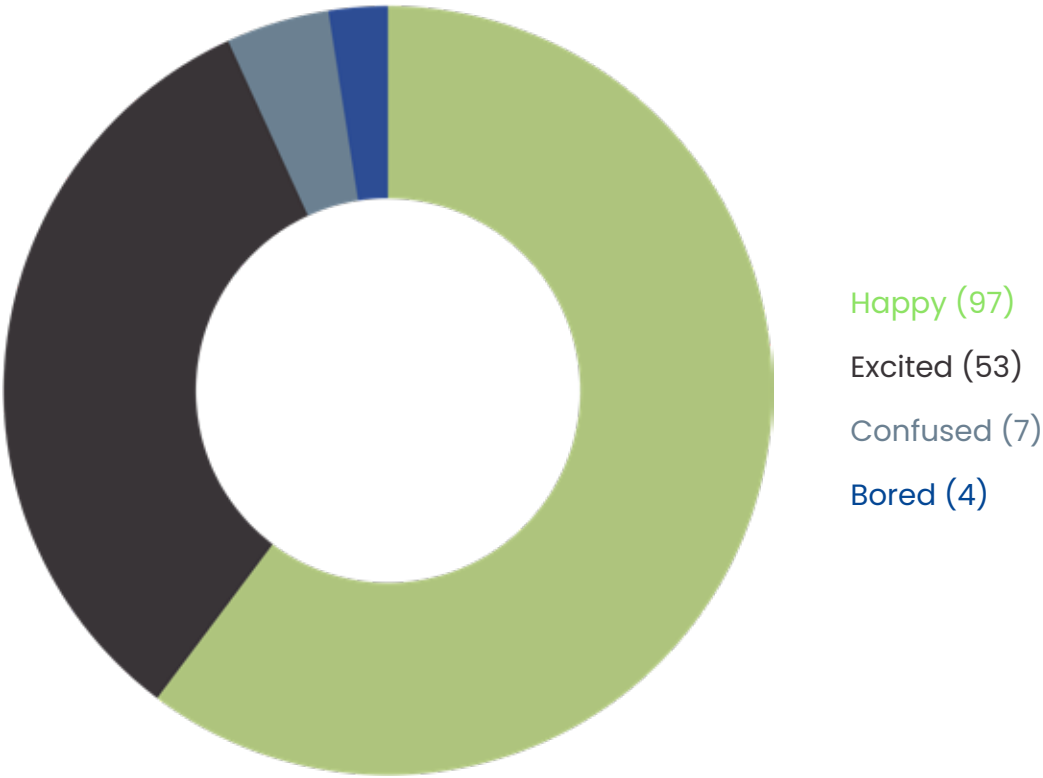
Figure 11: Children's (116) experience with art activities
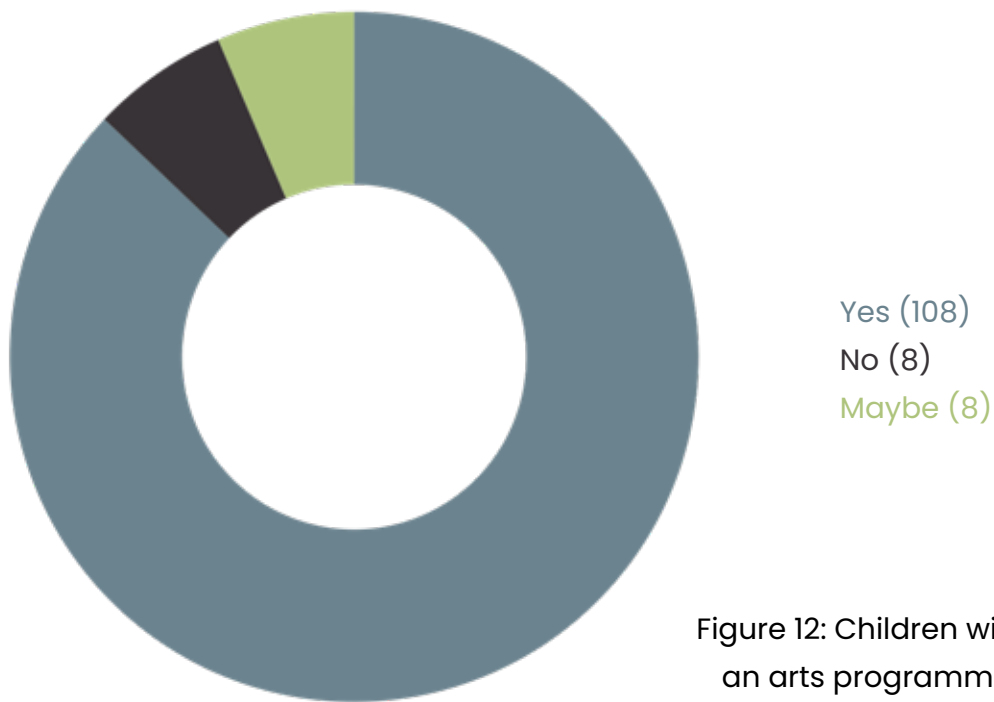
Yes (108)
No (8)
Maybe (8)

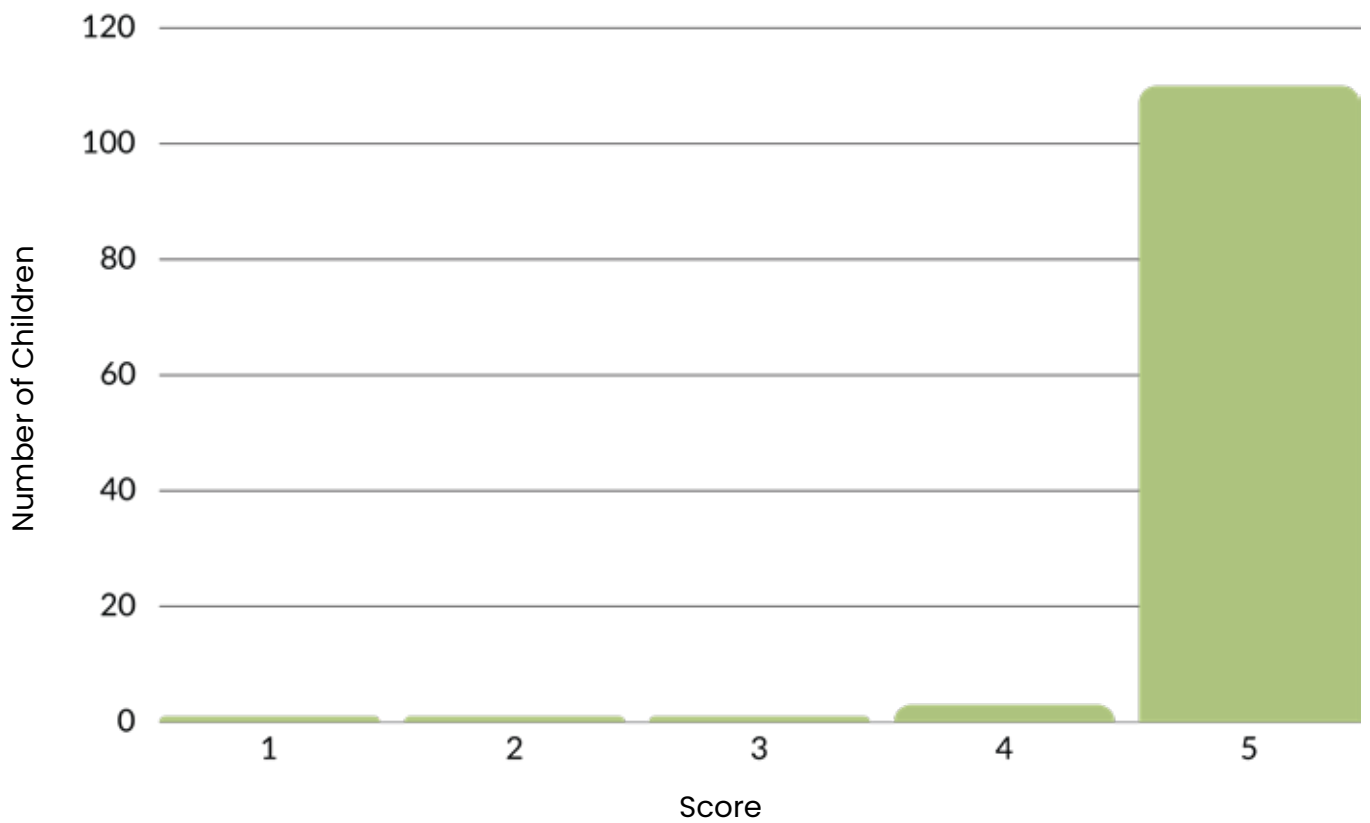Figure 12: Children willing to participate in an arts programme from a total of 116

Figure 13: Children's (116) experience on a scale of 1 to 5

End line Survey

End line Survey

The end line survey was conducted to assess the impact and effectiveness of the art study on the participating children. It aimed to evaluate changes in their knowledge, skills, attitudes and overall satisfaction with the study. By comparing these end line results with baseline data, the survey offered insights into the children's learning experiences, their enjoyment of art activities and any shifts in their interest in creative pursuits and community engagement.

At baseline, the survey identified a significant lack of exposure among children to diverse art forms, such as folk, contemporary and abstract art, with none of the participants familiar with such styles. By the end line, however, 110 of116 children (95%) reported a strong comprehension of the art techniques introduced during the programme. This highlights the programme's success in bridging prior knowledge gaps and fostering an appreciation for diverse artistic expressions.

Regarding attitudes and engagement, the baseline indicated that 66% children (77) practised art sporadically, with engaging at least once or twice weekly, primarily at home or school. Post-programme, this improved a bit to 69% (80 children)expressing a preference for creating art weekly.

93% (108) indicated that they enjoyed making art "much more" than before.

Finally, the programme enhanced aspirations for creative pursuits. Initially, the baseline survey highlighted children's limited aspirations tied to their artistic practices, with a focus on rangoli or basic crafts. By the end line, 94% (109)expressed enthusiasm for community art activities and 82% (95) rated the programme as meeting their expectations.

These findings affirm the programme's effectiveness in addressing the gaps identified during the baseline, laying a strong foundation for sustained artistic growth and engagement. This feedback has helped determine the study's success in meeting its objectives and highlights areas for improvement.

Knowledge and Skills
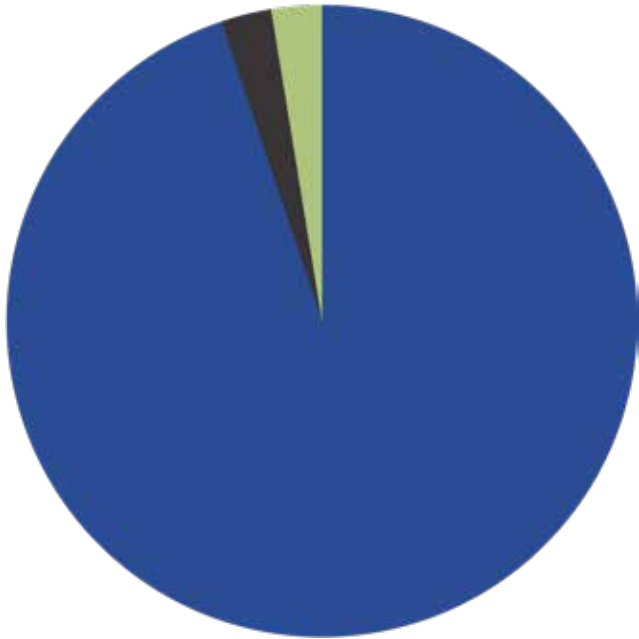
Understood concepts very well (110)

Somewhat understood the concepts (3)

Did not understand the concepts (3)

Figure 14: Comprehension of art techniques used in the Art Study by 116 children

Attitudes and Perceptions

Much less (5)

About the same (5)

Much more (108)

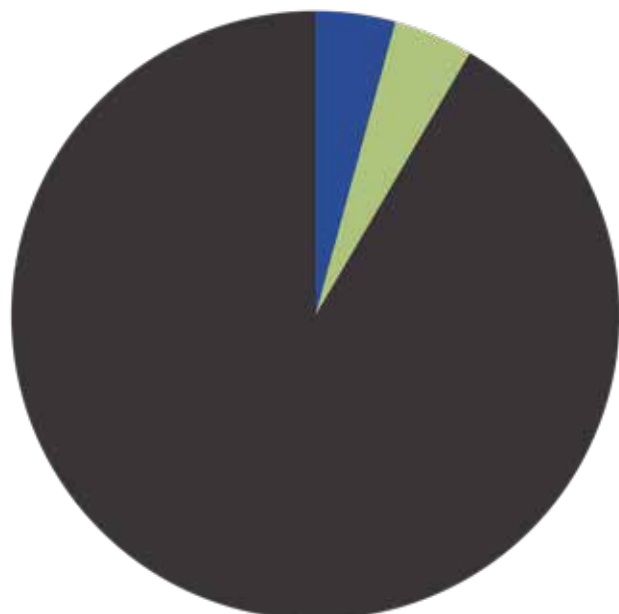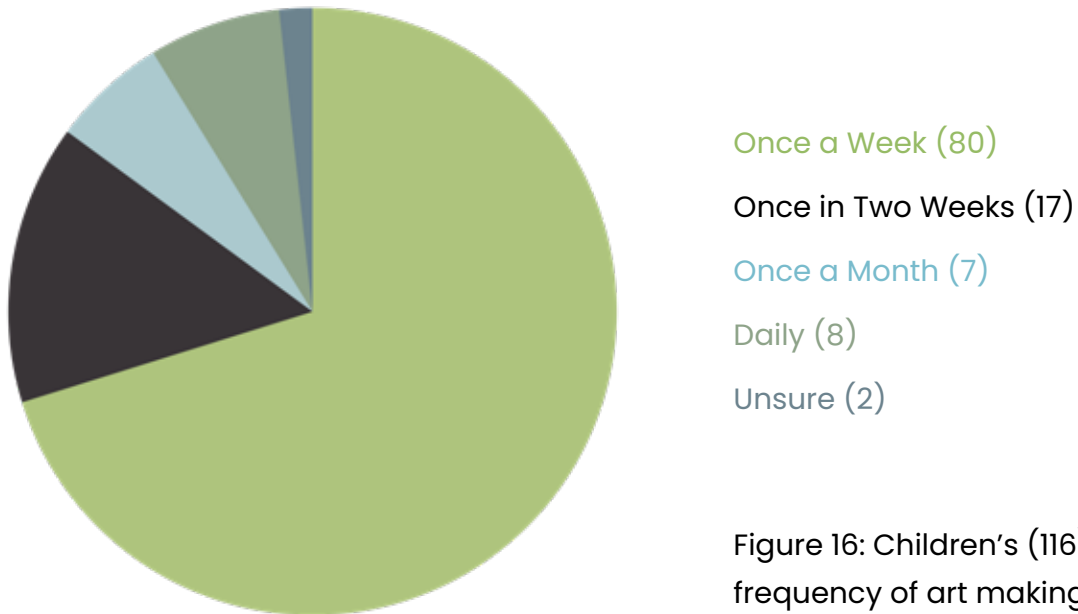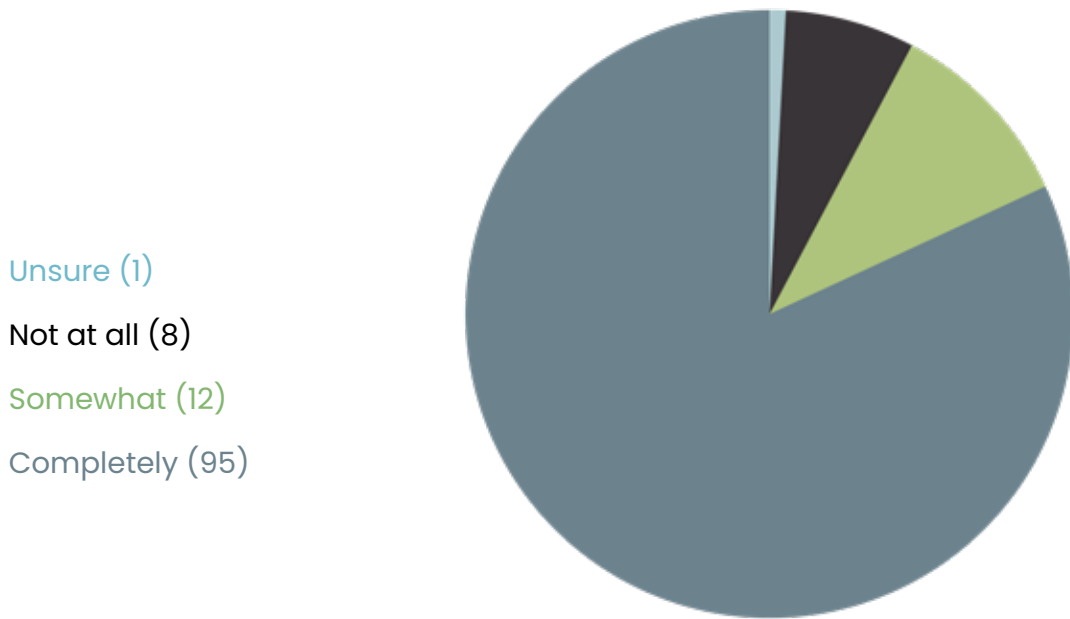Figure 15: Art enjoyment among 116 children post-activities

Goals and Expectations

Once a Week (80)

Once in Two Weeks (17)

Once a Month (7)

Daily (8)

Unsure (2)

Figure 16: Children's (116) desired frequency of art making

Unsure (1)

Not at all (8)

Somewhat (12)

Completely (95)

Figure 17: How the art activities met the 116 children's expectations Once

Barriers to Art education

Barriers to Art Education

1. **Lack of Structured Programmes, Awareness and Expertise:**

   a. Limited access to structured art programmes: This makes it difficult for children to regularly participate.

   b. Librarians' lack of training in supporting art activities: This affects the availability and quality of arts activities in libraries.

   c. Sporadic volunteer-led art activities: These are not structured or consistent, often lacking continuity, reducing art to a recreational activity.

2. **Limited Resources and Accessibility:**

   a. Access to art materials: Only basic art supplies are available in the libraries, limiting the possibility of exploring different mediums and techniques.

   b. Physical limitations (e.g., accessibility issues): Some children may have difficulty accessing art programmes due to physical barriers like distance, lack of ramps, or in adequate facilities.

   c. Social limitations: While no such limitations emerged during the period of the survey, a consistent engagement might reveal more details.

3. **Competing Priorities:**

   a. School work and exams taking priority over arts engagement: With the pressure of academic performance and exam preparation, arts activities are often sidelined in favour of more traditional subjects.

   b. Parents focusing on library books for competitive exam preparation or literature studies: Parents may prioritise academic resources for exams and future career prospects.

Recommendations

Recommendations

01 Structured Arts Education Programme

A structured arts education programme would provide a consistent and progressive framework for developing children's artistic skills and cultural understanding. By creating a curriculum that builds on foundational art techniques, introduces cultural traditions and incorporates new,creative mediums, children can gain a deeper appreciation and stronger grasp of the arts.

The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education strongly advocates that arts and culture should be integral to every child's education and that it is crucial for fostering creativity and personal expression in young learners. By ensuring that young people have opportunities to engage with various art forms, they will also be equipped with the skills necessary for success in the creative industries.

02 Diversifying Capacities of Librarians

Training librarians to lead and support art-based activities can be transformative for both the libraries and the communities they serve. Equipping librarians with skills in various art forms, child engagement techniques and cultural education can enable them to foster a more interactive and art-rich environment. This investment in librarian development enhances the library's role as a community learning hub and encourages more children to participate in arts programme.

In her study on Restructuring and Capacity Building in Libraries, Dr. Bhagyashri Y Keskar discusses the importance of continuous professional development for librarians, who play a key role in innovatively managing resources to meet user needs.

03 Museum and Arts Organisation Partnerships

Forming partnerships with organisations specialising in arts education, youth engagement or community development can provide additional resources, expertise and opportunities for students. These organisations can bring in **specialised trainers, contribute unique materials and assist in organising community events**, adding value to the arts programme.

Drawing inspiration from museum-based learning initiatives like those led by Sanjana Rangan (Museum Consultant, Department of Archaeology), community libraries can partner with museums to expand children's educational horizons. Such partnerships play a crucial role in not only curating knowledge and collective history but also in connecting individuals to social, physical and mental health resources. Moreover, such partnerships can lead to joint exhibitions, shared resources and increased visibility for both institutions.

04 Community Engagement

Engaging the community in art activities can increase support for arts education and help build a sense of pride in local culture. Involving parents, local artists and other community members in workshops or exhibitions allows them to share their stories through art. It also enables collaborative projects that can **strengthen social bonds and bring the community together, cultivating a supportive environment for the children's creative growth**.

American Library Association's report on Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries, campaigns for visual arts integration in libraries to engage the community. Hosting exhibitions, workshops and events that invite community members to create and share their art, strengthens community ties. For instance, creating library events with local community members that enhance the aesthetic appeal of the library space can create a sense of belonging for them and a more engaging atmosphere for its user institutions.

05 Accessibility to Diverse Art Materials

Ensuring access to a variety of art materials, including both traditional and contemporary options, allows children to experiment and find creative expression suited to their preferences. **Introducing resources such as recycled materials, clay and painting supplies, as well as more specialised items like natural pigments, expands their artistic possibilities.**

Saturday Art Class of Mumbai works with underserved schools to integrate art into children's education, providing access to diverse materials such as paints, clay, recycled objects, photographs, leaves etc. Their sessions encourage children to explore both Indian and International art forms. It also promotes teaching about different artistic traditions and practices that can inspire new generation of artists and art lovers, encouraging them to explore and appreciate a wide range of artistic expressions.

06 Inclusion and Accessibility

A successful arts education programme must prioritise inclusion and accessibility to ensure all children can benefit. This means **designing programmes that accommodate children with disabilities and those from underserved backgrounds**, providing adaptive tools and flexible learning methods where necessary.

The UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education highlights the role of arts in creating inclusive and equitable learning environments. Libraries, as community hubs, can champion accessibility by offering tailored materials and formats, ensuring that every child, regardless of their needs or background, can participate fully and express themselves creatively.

07

Involvment of Artist and Arts Educators

Engaging with artists or arts educators enrich the children's learning experience by exposing them to high-quality instruction and new techniques. These professionals bring a depth of knowledge and unique perspectives that inspire students and provide mentorship. Additionally, their periodic involvement keeps the programme fresh and exciting, offering the children new skills and ideas to explore. To nurture creativity and community engagement, libraries can adopt models to integrating local art forms with education.

For instance, Madhukara. M. L , a drama teacher at the Government Higher Primary School, Gumballi village, Chamarajanagar district, invited leather puppet artists to his school. Such initiatives can lead into hands-on workshops where children are not only passive participants but are actively involved in the creation process- learning the craft from start to finish. This interdisciplinary approach can create a more vibrant cultural environment, drawing more users into the space.

Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasise the transformative potential of integrating structured arts education into Gram Panchayat libraries. These spaces, already vital as knowledge hubs, can further evolve into creative and cultural centers that nurture both individual growth and community cohesion. By addressing the identified barriers-such as lack of resources, structured programmes and trained facilitators-libraries can unlock opportunities for children to explore their artistic potential while enhancing cognitive, emotional, and social development.

The recommendations provided in this report advocate for strategic interventions, including librarian training, collaboration with artists and cultural organisations and community engagement initiatives.

These measures aim to create a vibrant ecosystem that supports creativity, preserves cultural heritage and fosters inclusivity. Investing in arts education within these libraries benefits not only children but also adults and the broader community, promoting shared identity, cultural pride and social well-being. The findings and strategies outlined in this report offer a pathway to ensure that Gram Panchayat libraries serve as catalysts for lifelong learning, creative exploration and community development, inspiring future generations to dream and create.

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