# Monthly October 2025
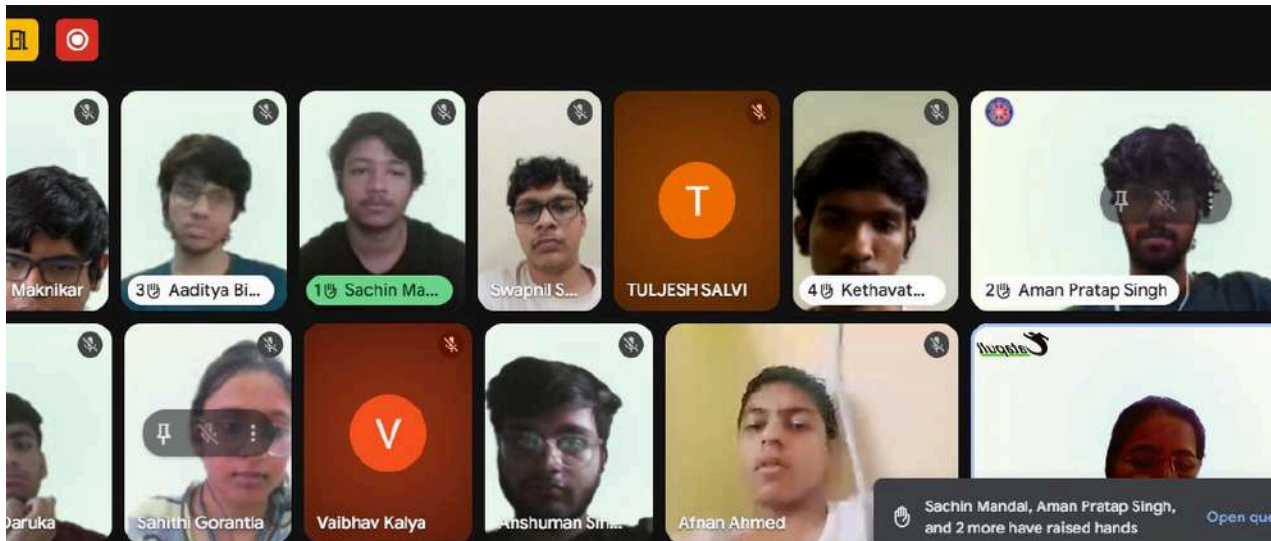
# Executive Summary

In October 2025, our journey to bring digital learning closer to rural and tribal students in Maharashtra grew even stronger.

Every day, students received bilingual worksheets, recorded lessons, and chapter-wise homework help—simple tools that made a big difference. With the help of our YouTube lessons and shared study materials, more than 10,000 students from the Nagpur and Nashik regions were able to learn better during their regular and after school hours.

This month was also special because three new programs came to life:

- Buddy Program
- Story Reading Program
- Spoken English Program

Volunteers from IIT Powai stepped in to guide these sessions, helping students improve their reading habits, communication skills, subject understanding, and most importantly, their confidence.

We also spent time meeting with project officer- Nasik region, teachers, and headmasters. These conversations helped us understand attendance issues, technical issues, and the kind of support schools need. From these discussions, our next steps became clear—we plan to launch a Career Counselling Program, introduce Virtual O-Lab science experiment sessions, and recognise teachers and students who are showing exceptional effort.

To close the month, we shared two inspiring student stories—real examples of how access to digital learning is helping young learners push through personal challenges and move ahead in their education with courage and hope.

## In this report you can expect:

# Daily Academic Engagement Highlights
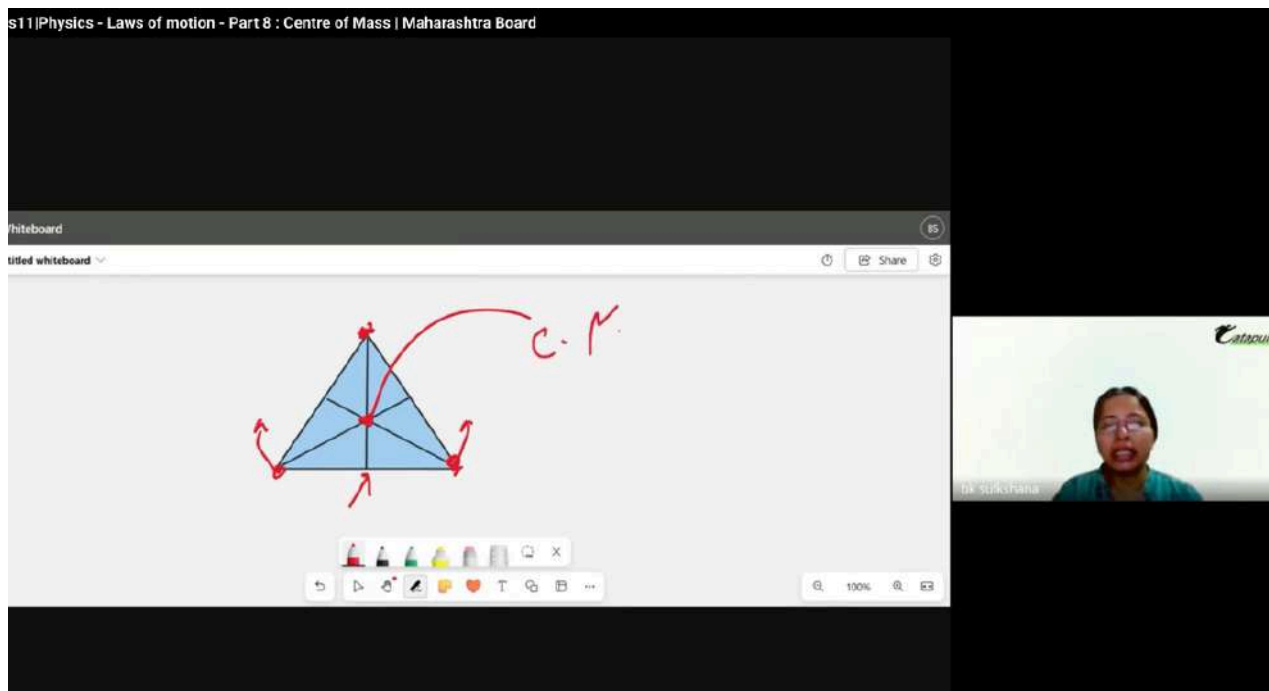


- In October, approximately **1500 students from the Nagpur & Nashik region**, which primarily includes Dharashiv, Jalgaon, Nashik, Beed, and Sambhajinagar districts of classes 8 to 11, participated in over **70 hours** of structured online live sessions.

- Learning support was further enhanced through chapter-wise homework assignments, bilingual worksheets, and access to recorded lessons on YouTube. These supplementary resources have been extended to the Nashik region, collectively **benefiting more than 10,000 students (during functional days)** and reinforcing classroom learning effectively.

**NOTE:** In October, for one week morning live and recorded sessions for students from Ashramshala Schools in the Nagpur and Nashik regions were conducted. Classes were suspended for the remaining three weeks as the schools remained closed due to festive holidays.
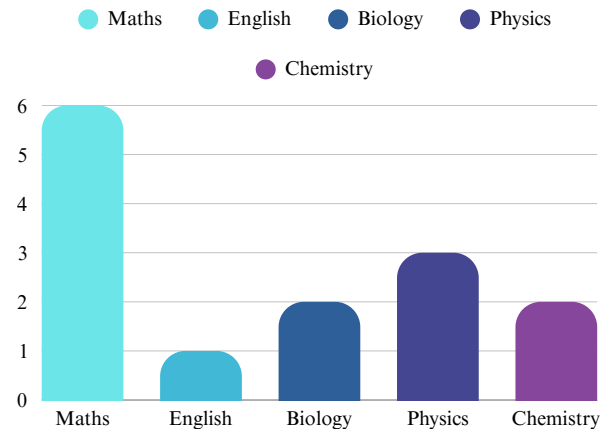
**The infographic below illustrates the number of classes, class-wise, during October.**
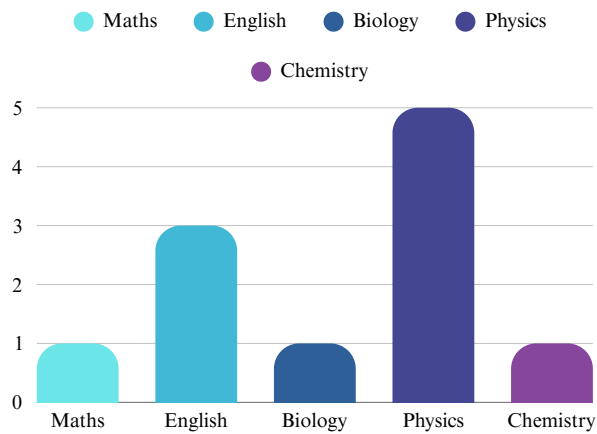
# Number of sessions-class wise
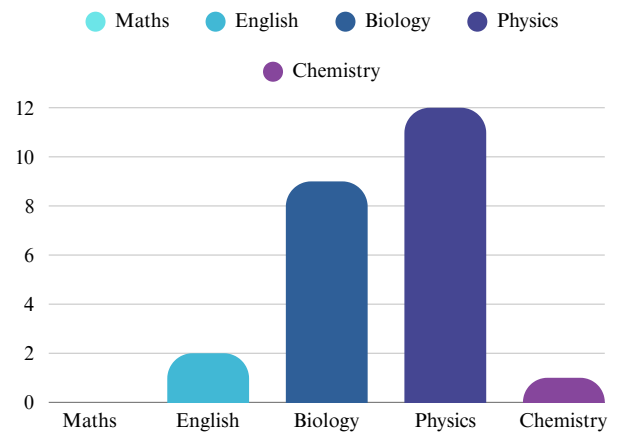
### Class 8 sub-wise sessions (Evening)
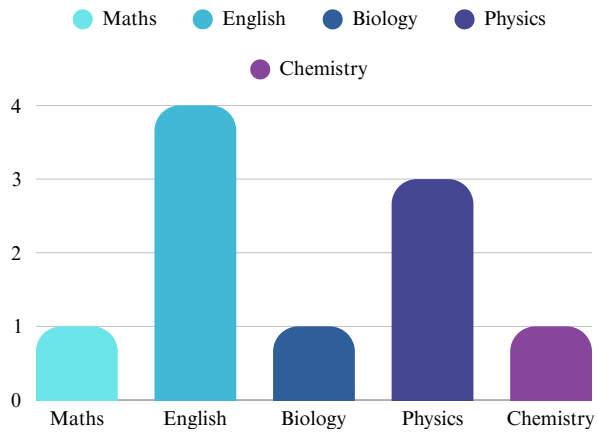


### Class 9 sub-wise sessions (Evening)



### Class 10 sub-wise sessions (Evening)



### Class 11 sub-wise sessions (Evening)

# Community Engagement Highlights - With Project Officer



**Date:** September 29th, 2025

**Attendees:** Ms Prema Mishra & Shri Nitin Isokar (Project Officer) Nagpur region.

**Duration:** 1 Hour

**Mode:** Online

**Objective:** To review the implementation of programs in several schools in the Nagpur division and identify areas for support and improvement in the upcoming academic quarter. The key points of the meeting are given below.

**Key observations:**

Active participation from the schools of Ramtek, Chidanga. Low participation from Kolimara, Ladgaon due to holidays.

Connectivity and infrastructure are major hurdles for consistent learning.

The incomplete data of students of classes 8,9,10 and 11 who effectively engage with our classes is hampering progress tracking.

**Discussion on upcoming initiatives:**

Career counselling programme for classes 8-10 starting next month.

Virtual O-Lab sessions with IIT volunteers for science experiments.

Teacher recognition and star student awards.

Boot camp for upper class 12 students (November-December 2025).

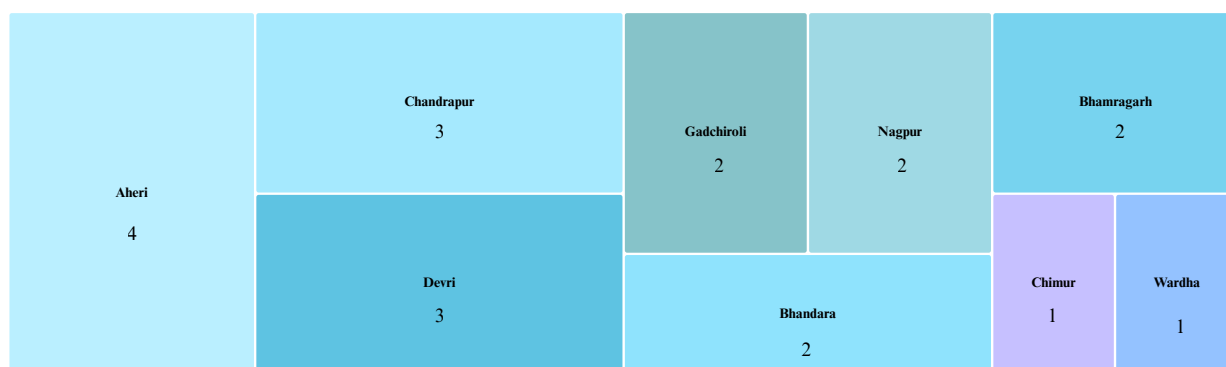Laptop distribution underway to support online learning.

**Support required:**

Student data and participation reports.

Quarterly review meetings and school visits from October 25.

# Community Engagement Highlights- With School Teachers and Headmasters



District with the Number of Schools we engaged to support in October



In the month of October, the Community Coordinator engaged with the **20 schools under 9 project officers in the Nagpur region** (mentioned district-wise above in the figure) to understand and address challenges such as language barriers, technical issues, and absenteeism. Information on future initiatives, including a virtual lab, career guidance program, and technological support to deserving students, was provided. Given below are the highlights of the discussion done.

## Reflection from teachers on school engagement with virtual classes

- Nilesh Sir, Principal of a Marathi-medium school (Grades 1–10) —**Nagpur region** confirmed that students from 8th, 9th, and 10th grades participate in the virtual classes. Teachers use mobile phones connected to classroom TVs for video playback. Meanwhile encourages students to maintain a viewing record under a class monitor's supervision. They reported videos in topics such as "Linear Equations," "Laws of Motion," and English poems, which students generally find helpful.
- Subject teacher of Government Ashram School, **Aheri region, Gadchiroli,** confirmed that recorded lessons are shown on classroom Android TVs using mobile hotspots. He highlighted that video lessons support concept clarity, and students—many aspiring for NEET and engineering—benefit from structured guidance.
- Similarly, Head Master of Government Ashram School, **Devalapar,** highlighted school uses projectors and TV screens to conduct video-based lessons, though network issues and limited technical resources remain challenges. **With around 61 students in Class 8, 47 in Class 9, and 41 in Class 10, teachers reported improved conceptual understanding through structured, recorded sessions.**

# Community Engagement Highlights- School Teachers and Headmasters



## Reflection from teachers on challenges with virtual class

Students face difficulties joining our classes due to a significant **shortage of staff in the hostel,** and the **nonavailability of school or hostel wifi** causes further difficulties to connect with live classes and engage with recorded sessions on YouTube. The challenges specific to each project officer are highlighted below.

| | |
|---|---|
| Shortage of subject teachers in secondary and senior secondary classes, specifically for subjects English, and Science. | Unavailability of wifi at schools and hostels causes difficulty for teachers as well as students to join live classes or view recorded sessions on YouTube. |

## Support and upcoming initiative shared

- Daily and weekly recorded lessons, along with chapter-wise worksheets and answer keys, are being shared to ease teacher workload and promote student self-assessment.
- Focused sessions on career counseling are planned for students next month.
- With IIT volunteers, virtual science experiments through the Virtual O-Lab platform will be conducted to  enhance science learning for students of classes 8,9,10 and 11.

# Reading Program
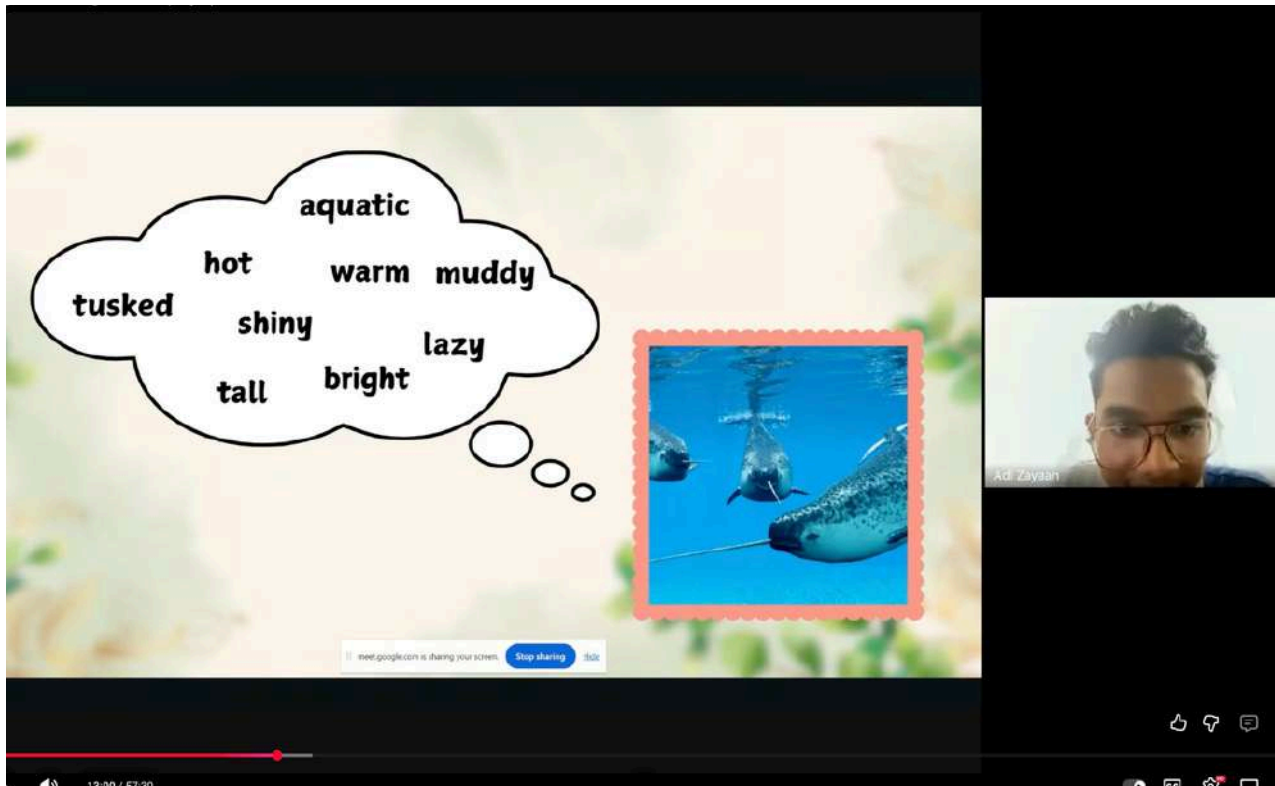


**First session**: 22/10/2025
**Participant school**:  Sainik School, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar
**Class**: 6-7
**Total registration**: 300
**Avg participants in class**: 55
**Total engagement**:  16 hours
**Resources used**: Flipbook and Google Meet

## Overview

The primary objective of this program was through engaging stories around various topics, enhance the English language proficiency of students of Sainik School, specific focus on improving **reading and writing skills**. Each session used to begin with a playful interaction with students, followed by an introduction and discussion around the topic of the session. For example, in one of the classes, the facilitator engaged students around the discussion on the human skeletal system, focusing on bones such as the femur, humerus, skull, and rib cage. Students were encouraged to identify and touch the corresponding body parts, guess, and share. This approach fostered content knowledge as well as basic language skills among students. Through the use of engaging stories, interactive grammar activities, vocabulary enrichment, and real-world connections, the sessions provided a holistic learning experience for approximately 55 students from classes VI and VII. The activities promoted curiosity, critical thinking, and collaborative learning among participants. Throughout the program, the facilitator consistently encouraged and supported participants to unmute, speak, and share their observations in English. This not only enhanced their language practice but also helped them gain confidence as learners and develop a sense of global citizenship, grounded in an appreciation of their natural and cultural environment.

# Spoken English Program





**First session**: 16/10/2025
**Participant school:**Sainik School, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar
**Class**: 8 to 12
**Total registration**: 550
**Average participants in class**: 70
**Total Engagement**: 16 Hours
**Resource used**: Flipbook, and Google Meet

## Overview

Through 16-hour thematic virtual sessions of Spoken English Program, the teacher engaged students of class 8 to 12 of Sainik school of Maharashtra in reading, discussion, and self-reflection around the topic of the session. The overall focus was on building students' confidence in communicating effectively, especially in English. By encouraging students to read aloud, relate personally to the story, teacher used to trigger students to think. By guided discussion, students shared their own experiences and feelings about school or hostel life, their interests, favourite subjects, and sports preferences, hence the teacher created opportunities for students to express themselves fully and respond in complete english sentences. Additionally teacher used timely guided questions around new words, sentence formation, and vocabulary, to ensure that students stayed aligned with the learning objective. At the end of each session children felt refreshed, recharged, and excited to return to their school and hostel life. This program by integrating language learning with personal development and emotional connection, played a vital role in supporting the emotional and psychological upliftment of the students of Sainik School.

# Spoken English & Reading Programs Reflection



**Observation**

- Students demonstrated better pronunciation and comprehension over the course of the sessions.
- Students became more comfortable expressing their thoughts in English during virtual discussions.
- The storytelling approach sparked curiosity and joy in reading English texts.
- The facilitator's storytelling technique created a lively and supportive learning atmosphere despite the virtual mode.

**Student Feedback**

Suman of class 8th said- "I liked the stories and learned many new words."
Swayam of class 7th said - "It was fun to read together and act out the characters."
Prakriti of class 9th said- "Now I can understand English stories better."

**Facilitator's Reflection**

- The facilitator of the English Spoken Program noted that storytelling method proved to be an effective tool for language acquisition. Students showed noticeable progress in their ability to understand English narratives and respond in simple sentences. The interactive format also helped overcome hesitation and built students' enthusiasm toward learning English.
- For the storytelling session, the IIT volunteer expressed that his motivation to join was to help young learners improve their reading and communication skills while also enhancing his own teaching and engagement abilities. Despite being virtual, the sessions were highly interactive and filled with enthusiasm.

**Recommendations by facilitator**

- Extend the program to include creative writing sessions inspired by stories.
- Introduce audio storytelling resources for continued listening practice.

# Buddy Program

The Buddy Program in collaboration with NSS, IIT Powai, Maharashtra ,aims to foster holistic student development by integrating academic enrichment for personal and social growth. Through structured weekly sessions focusing on core subjects—Mathematics, Science, and English—the program enhances conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills, while dedicated soft skill sessions strengthen communication, teamwork, leadership, confidence, and emotional intelligence. By promoting peer learning, goal setting, and reflective practice, the program nurtures self-discipline, empathy, and lifelong learning habits, empowering students to achieve academic excellence and personal growth in a supportive, collaborative environment.
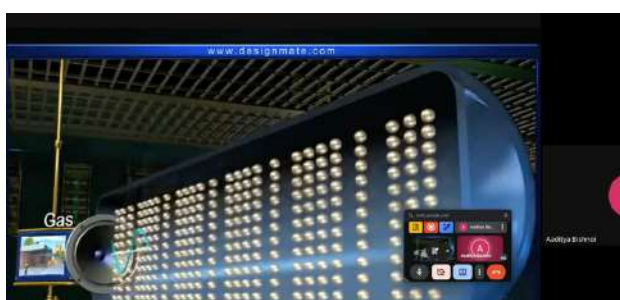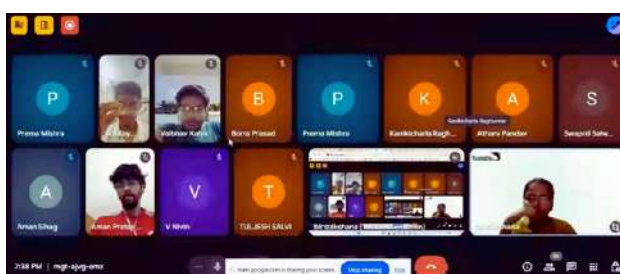


## Induction session with buddies

The 2nd cycle of the program was initiated with two days of detailed training and orientation sessions on the 3rd and 9th of October for all 23 volunteers of IIT Powai, Maharashtra, by the director and program coordinator, respectively. The session provided a detailed understanding of the structure and workflow of the mentoring program, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of volunteers, especially those involved in content creation and those directly interacting with students.
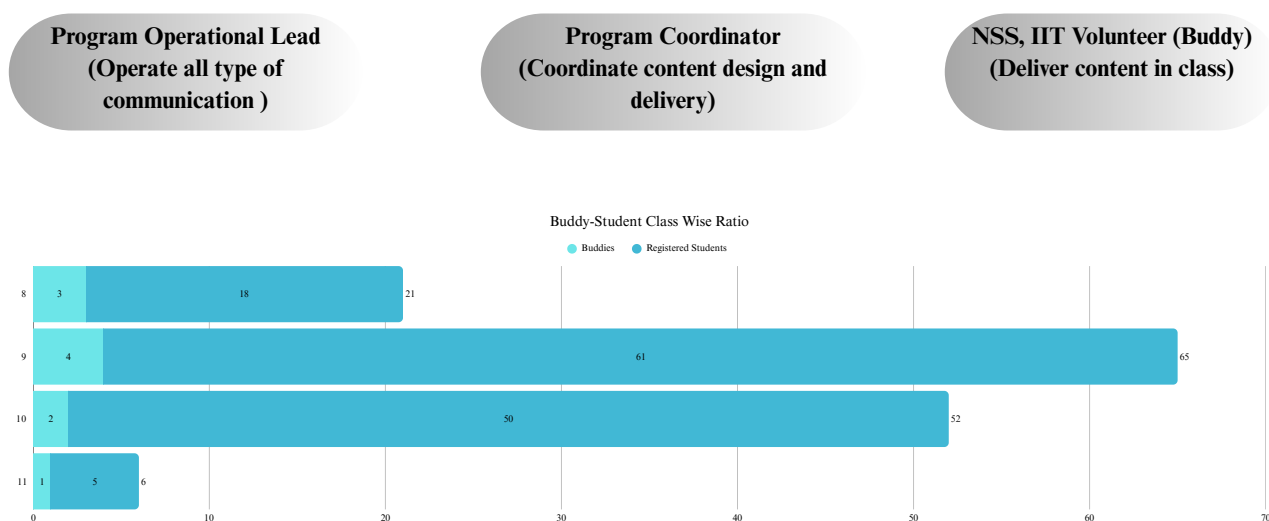
The core part of the session elaborates on the operational details: how volunteers will conduct sessions via online platforms, use various tools like screen sharing, Microsoft Whiteboard, and PPT presentations for teaching and soft skills, and maintain records of attendance and session recordings. Volunteers were instructed on technical aspects, such as sharing specific tabs or windows during sessions, using virtual backgrounds, and the importance of joining meetings early to troubleshoot connectivity issues.

The facilitator also shares teaching materials, including textbooks in English and Marathi, and encourages volunteers to use split-screen functionality to manage bilingual resources effectively. The session stressed the importance of recording sessions for accountability and review and guided volunteers on interactively engaging with children, incorporating icebreaking activities and games to foster a comfortable learning environment.

# Buddy Program October Highlights

In October, Buddy Program has been implemented across multiple grade levels, i.e, classes 8 to 11. Overall, **around 33 sessions with students were organized,** including **8 from Grade 8, 13 from Grade 9, 7 from Grade 10, and 5 from Grade 11.** Each week, s**essions consist of one hour of focused discussion on core subjects—Mathematics, Science, and English—and one hour dedicated to soft skill development**. **Sessions are facilitated jointly by NSS,IIT volunteers** supported by class monitors (buddy supporters) and the program operational lead. The sessions were conducted in small peer groups to ensure personalized attention and effective mentoring. Academic sessions emphasized concept clarity, doubt resolution, and collaborative learning, while soft skill sessions engaged students through interactive activities, role plays, and reflective exercises. Attendance, participation, and progress were systematically tracked to assess student engagement and learning outcomes, ensuring that the program operates efficiently and aligns with its goal of fostering both academic excellence and holistic personal development.

## Program Structure

| Program Operational Lead (Operate all type of communication ) | Program Coordinator (Coordinate content design and delivery) | NSS, IIT Volunteer (Buddy) (Deliver content in class) |
|---|---|---|

**Buddy-Student Class Wise Ratio**

● Buddies ● Registered Students



## Weekly Session with Students

Around 23 weekly sessions with students in October were organized by IIT volunteers, focused primarily on providing consistent guidance in their core subjects — Mathematics, Science, and English — through peer-based doubt-solving, conceptual discussions, and collaborative problem-solving sessions conducted for one hour per week. The remaining 10 sessions focused on strengthening soft skills, such as communication skills, among students of classes 8 to 11.

## Weekly Meet with Buddies

In October, two weekly meetings with the buddy coordinator provided an opportunity for IIT volunteers to share their reflections, feedback, and discuss any challenges related to classes, pedagogical strategies, and students' context. By prioritizing communication skills, active listening, emotional engagement, and systematic monitoring, the session ensured that both volunteers and children benefited meaningfully during this program. This weekly meet not only addresses queries around the engagement with students but also fosters personal growth, confidence, and interpersonal skills among volunteers of IIT, thereby contributing to their holistic development too.

# Stories of Hope
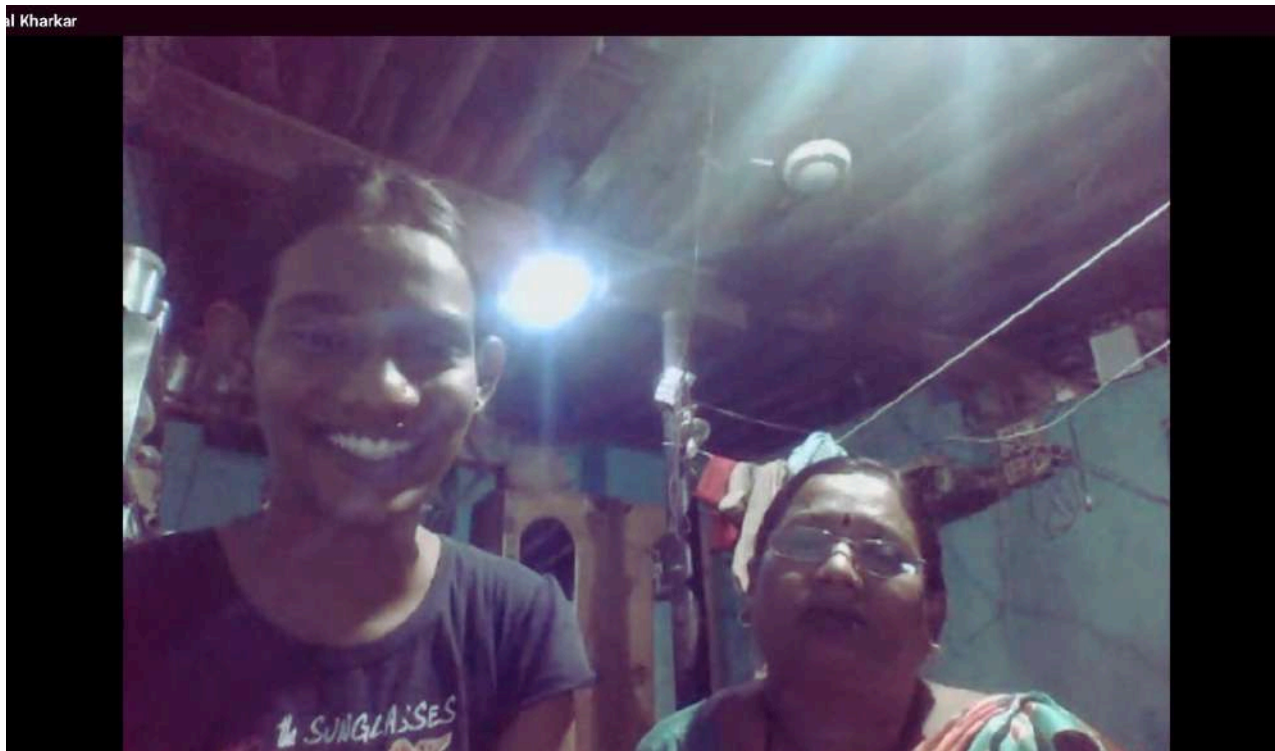


## A 9th Grader's Triumph: How Access and Confidence Paved the Way for Academic Success

Our student Komal Santosh Kharkar, a 9th grader from the village of Jitpir in Jalgaon district, embodies resilience and determination. Despite numerous challenges, including electricity outages, a late-night study schedule, and financial constraints, with access to our online classes and a digital device, she is confidently progressing towards her dream of becoming a police officer. During the discussion, she began by sharing how she manages to study past midnight due to daytime work commitments and how math continues to be a challenging subject for her. She said, "Math is a bit difficult for me. Sometimes everything in math feels hard." Her mother also mentioned, "She struggles a bit with math, but excels in all her other subjects." The daily online math class and one-to-one doubt-clearing sessions offered under the Buddy Program helped her to overcome this challenge. With this support, Komal now seems more determined, as she shared, "I used to feel scared to ask questions about math in school, but in online classes, I feel no hesitation to ask my doubts." Komal's school introduced her to online classes. The larger screen of the laptop, provided to her, allows her to easily access online classes and view digital study materials such as daily homework and assignments. This eliminates the need to attend extra tuition classes outside her home. This convenience, along with the encouraging online learning environment, has made her studies more accessible and effective.

Her mother notices the difference: "There is a big change; she pays more attention, answers questions well, and tells me everything she learns. I'm proud of her." Komal shares, "I feel great when in online class, my teacher praises me for answering questions. It helps me want to study more." Komal is thoughtfully considering taking the science stream after 10th grade. While her family's financial situation often means carefully balancing expenses for school fees and uniforms, they continue doing their best to support her aspirations. As her mother explains the struggle: "When it's time to pay fees or buy uniforms, I just have to adjust between old and new stuff and make it work somehow."

Her perseverance and the advantages of digital learning demonstrate that with the right tools and confidence, academic success is within reach, no matter the circumstances.

# Stories of Hope



## Adapting and Thriving in a New Learning Environment

While tackling complex topics or managing rigorous dual schedules, Bauddhavi, a student in class 10 at Aahar Vidyalaya in Dharashiv district of Maharashtra, has been adapting, and using every available support provided by UCatapult Foundation to achieve her dream of joining the NDA or becoming a doctor. During a fun-filled virtual interaction with her, she said, "Online classes have removed the need to spend money on tuition I couldn't afford. Further, online classes from home are manageable to attend, at a time when the school science homework is heavy." Her disciplined routine, which starts with waking early at 5 am, attending school from 10 am to 4 pm, helps her dedicate evenings to online lessons and self-study. While sharing her experience with online classes, she found online classes flexible; if something is missed, it can be accessed from a YouTube recording. Though Bauddhavi acknowledged that virtual classes sometimes limit interaction and supervision of a learning process and outcome, she appreciates their flexibility — especially the option to revisit recorded lessons on YouTube whenever she misses a topic. Recognising her commitment, the UCatapult Foundation has supported her with a laptop, everyday classes, and mentorship programs such as the Buddy Program, which enhance her English communication, digital literacy, and time management skills through interactive peer learning and personalised guidance. Our holistic approach has empowered many rural students to overcome their unique challenges and ensure they gain not only academic knowledge but also essential 21st-century skills.

# Upcoming Initiatives




**UCatapult will be offering career counseling and virtual science lab programs for students.**

| Challenges | Initiatives |
|---|---|
| Many students are unaware of what career options exist after Class 10 and 12.<br>They often do not know when and how to start preparing for different career paths.<br>Students struggle due to lack of proper guidance, limited exposure, and no structured career information. | • Starting next month, UCatapult Foundation will launch a **Career Counselling Program** for students of Classes 8, 9, and 10 attending evening live classes.<br>• The program will offer customised, contextual, and structured guidance tailored to the needs of rural learners.<br>• It aims to help students clearly understand career possibilities and plan their next steps with confidence. |
| Most government schools lack well-equipped physical science labs.<br>Teachers face difficulties in demonstrating experiments for students of Classes 8, 9, 10, and 11.<br>Students miss out on hands-on activities that help them understand science concepts better. | • UCatapult, with support from NSSIIT volunteers, will conduct interactive science sessions for students.<br>• These sessions will use the **Virtual O-Lab** platform, allowing students to perform and observe experiments remotely.<br>• The initiative is designed to overcome the absence of physical labs in rural schools.<br>• It makes science learning more hands-on, engaging, and impactful for students. |

*Thank you for reading!*