SAMTSE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Royal University of Bhutan



UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S VALUATION OF VALUED EDUCATIONAL CAPABILITIES TO SCALE GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

A COMPARATIVE REPORT OF BASELINE AND ENDLINE FINDINGS

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2026

Disclaimers

The project 'Promoting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Schools, Building on What Children Want to Do and Be' is being implemented by LIKE Lab, Kathmandu University School of Arts with support from the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPE KIX) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of IDRC or its Board of Governors.

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Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *3*

GLOSSARY *5*

List of Tables 6

List of Figures 7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY *9*

SECTION I *11*

INTRODUCTION 11

1.1 Background 11

SECTION 2 ..... *14*

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS 14

2.1 Introduction to Capability approach, its components, meaning and importance 14

2.2 Application of Capability Approach in Education 16

2.3 Dimensions of Capability Approach 17

2.4 Summary 18

2.5 Conclusion 20

SECTION 3 ..... *21*

METHODOLOGY 21

3.1 Research Approach 21

3.3 Research Field Site 21

3.4 School Background 22

3.5 Sample selection and justification 24

3.6 Respondent's Profile 24

3.6 Data Collection 28

3.7 Data Analysis 29

3.8 Ethical considerations 30

SECTION 4 ..... *31*

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITY DOMAINS AND ITS INDICATORS *31*

4.1 Children's Assessment of Availability, Satisfaction, and Importance Across Capability Domains: Baseline–Endline Comparison 31

4.2 Children's Assessment of the Capability Domains: Baseline–Endline Comparison 35

SECTION 5 ..... *41*

VALUATION OF WELL-BEING AND AGENCY 41

5.1 Well-being and Agency 41

5.2 Gender 50

5.3 Grade 56

5.4 Ethnicity 65

5.5 CONCLUSION 87

REFERENCES 89

GLOSSARY

CA:	Capability Approach
CCD:	Community-Driven Development
CVEC:	Children's Valued Educational Capabilities
GESI:	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GNH:	Gross National Happiness
HSS:	Higher Secondary School
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoESD:	Ministry of Education and Skills Development
MSS:	Middle Secondary School
PAR:	Participatory Action Research
SAS:	Situational Analysis Study

List of Tables

Table 1: Sen's Space of Evaluation of Human Flourishing

Table 2: Capability Domain and its Indicators

Table 3: Availability, Satisfaction and Importance Scores given by Children out of 1900 Points

Table 4: Children's Assessment of the Capability Domains

Table 5: Well-being Freedom by Gender

Table 6: Well-being Achievement by Gender

Table 7: Agency Freedom by Gender

Table 8: Agency Achievement by Gender

Table 9: Well-being Freedom by Grade

Table 10: Well-being Achievement by Grade

Table 11: Agency Freedom by Grade

Table 12: Agency Achievement by Grade

List of Figures

Figure 1: A Map Showing the Study Site and the Selected Samples

Figure 2: Respondents' Gender

Figure 3: Respondents' Grade

Figure 4: Respondents' Ethnicity

Figure 5: Respondents' Religion

Figure 6: Father's Occupation

Figure 7: Mother's Occupation

Figure 8: Well-being Freedom

Figure 9: Well-being Achievement

Figure 10: Agency Freedom

Figure 11: Agency Achievement

Figure 12: Well-being Freedom by Ethnicity

Figure 13: Well-being Freedom by Ethnicity

Figure 14: Well-being Achievement by Ethnicity

Figure 15: Well-being Achievement by Ethnicity

Figure 16: Agency Freedom by Ethnicity

Figure 17: Agency Freedom by Ethnicity

Figure 18: Agency Achievement by Ethnicity

Figure 19: Agency Achievement by Ethnicity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from the baseline and endline assessments conducted in five selected schools in Bhutan, including both middle secondary and higher secondary schools. The assessments examined children's perceptions of the availability, satisfaction, and importance of educational and social resources within their school environments and explored how these resources were reflected in four key capability dimensions: wellbeing freedom, wellbeing achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. The baseline assessment established the initial conditions and provided an evidence base for informing project interventions, while the endline assessment examined patterns and changes following the implementation of project activities.

The study adopted a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach to ensure that children's voices and perspectives remained central to the assessment process. A total of 200 students from Grades I–X participated in the baseline study, with 40 students selected from each school while maintaining gender balance. The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) diagnostic tool, developed by the project's lead country partner, was culturally reviewed and adapted for the Bhutanese context prior to implementation. Students assessed resource-based capability domains across three dimensions—availability, satisfaction, and importance and rated wellbeing and agency domains across four evaluative dimensions: wellbeing freedom, wellbeing achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. The analysis examined variations across gender, grade level, and social groups to identify patterns of inclusion, disparity, and change between baseline and endline.

The baseline findings indicated generally positive perceptions of the availability and quality of school-related resources. Children reported relatively strong levels of wellbeing and agency across many capability domains, particularly in areas related to education, participation, social relations, religion and identity, freedom from exploitation, and shelter and environment. However, the baseline also identified areas requiring greater attention, including mental wellbeing, nutritional wellbeing, mobility, autonomy, and selected aspects of participation and agency. Differences were also observed across gender, grade levels, and ethnic groups, indicating that the availability of resources did not always translate equally into children's ability to exercise choices or achieve desired wellbeing outcomes.

The endline findings generally continued to show positive perceptions across the four capability dimensions, while also revealing changes in the relative strengths and weaknesses of particular domains. Improvements were evident in several areas of wellbeing and agency for particular gender, grade, and ethnic groups. For example, wellbeing-related outcomes showed improvements in areas such as mental wellbeing, bodily integrity, mobility, physical health, aspiration, and shelter and environment for some groups. Agency-related findings also demonstrated strong endline scores in domains such as autonomy, participation, social relations, mobility, freedom from exploitation, and identity-related areas among several groups. These patterns suggest that children continued to experience opportunities to exercise choice and translate those opportunities into actual actions and outcomes.

At the same time, the endline results indicate that progress was not uniform across all domains or population groups. Mental wellbeing remained an area of considerable variation, particularly within measures of agency freedom, while nutritional wellbeing continued to show relatively lower scores for some groups. Autonomy, participation, mobility, and religion and identity also showed differences across gender, grade, and ethnic groups. Some declines were observed in particular domains, which may reflect the influence of contextual factors, school structures, family and community circumstances, or differences in how children perceived and experienced their opportunities at the time of the endline assessment. Therefore, changes between baseline and endline should be interpreted as patterns of change rather than attributed solely to the project intervention.

The gender findings indicate that boys and girls experienced wellbeing and agency differently across several domains. At baseline, boys reported slightly higher scores in a number of areas related to autonomy, participation, bodily integrity, and educational experiences, particularly within agency-related measures, while girls demonstrated relatively stronger outcomes in selected wellbeing and health-related domains. At endline, the pattern remained mixed rather than showing a uniform gender difference. Girls demonstrated notable improvements in areas such as mental wellbeing and selected dimensions of autonomy, mobility, bodily integrity, and freedom from exploitation, while boys also showed improvements in areas including physical health, mental wellbeing, and bodily integrity. These findings suggest that gender continues to shape how children translate available resources and opportunities into meaningful choices and wellbeing outcomes.

Differences were also evident across grade levels**.** At endline, primary students showed notable improvements in areas such as mobility, physical health, shelter and environment, GESI curriculum, and several aspects of agency. Middle and higher secondary students also demonstrated improvements in selected domains, including aspiration, bodily integrity, and mental wellbeing, although some declines were observed in participation, religion and identity, autonomy, and UIPIT-related areas. This indicates that children's experiences of wellbeing and agency may change with age, grade level, increasing responsibilities, and the social and institutional contexts in which they participate.

The findings across ethnic groups similarly demonstrate both commonalities and variations. Several ethnic groups recorded high endline scores in social relations, participation, freedom from exploitation, bodily integrity, mobility, and identity-related domains. However, mental wellbeing and nutritional wellbeing showed greater variation, with some groups recording substantially lower scores than others. Smaller ethnic groups also produced some very high scores, which should be interpreted cautiously because smaller sample sizes can make group averages more sensitive to individual responses. The findings therefore highlight the importance of considering both common experiences and the specific circumstances of different social groups when designing GESI interventions.

Taken together, the baseline and endline findings suggest that the participating schools provide generally supportive environments in which children report positive levels of wellbeing and agency across many domains**.** The findings also demonstrate, however, that access to resources alone does not necessarily result in equal opportunities, choices, or outcomes for all children. Differences by gender, grade, and ethnicity indicate the continuing influence of social norms, institutional practices, family and community contexts, and gendered expectations on children's ability to convert resources into valued capabilities.

The baseline–endline comparison therefore provides important evidence of both continuity and change. Areas that remained consistently strong provide a foundation on which schools and project partners can build, while domains showing lower or more variable scores including mental wellbeing, nutritional wellbeing, autonomy, mobility, and selected aspects of participation and agency require continued attention. The findings also reinforce the importance of creating spaces where children can express their views, make meaningful choices, participate in decision-making, and access support without discrimination.

Overall, the baseline and endline assessments provide an important evidence base for strengthening Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) within Bhutanese schools. The findings can support schools, educators, project partners, and policymakers in developing contextually responsive strategies that address differences in children's experiences and strengthen their valued capabilities. More broadly, the results point to the need for sustained efforts to promote safer, more inclusive, participatory, and empowering learning environments in which all children regardless of gender, grade, ethnicity, or social background are able to develop wellbeing and exercise meaningful agency.

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A well-functioning school is expected to promote institutional well-being by contributing to the holistic well-being of its students and staff, including both teaching and non-teaching personnel. Within this context, a diagnostic tool for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) can support public schools in identifying institutional strengths and gaps through systematic assessment of students' experiences and perceptions. Such an approach places children's needs and well-being at the centre of efforts to promote gender equality, equity, and social inclusion. The evidence generated through GESI diagnosis can inform institutional decision-making, guide the development of GESI-transformative programmes and practices, and support improvements in the school environment that contribute to children's well-being, agency, and meaningful participation.

The GESI diagnostic framework and tool used in this study emerged as an innovation from the KIX-IDRC-funded project titled *Effectiveness and Scalability of Programs for Children Who Are Out of School and at Risk of Dropping Out in Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal*. In Bhutan, the innovation was adopted through the project *Promoting GESI in Secondary Schools: Building on What Children Value and Aspire to Be and Do*, led by Kathmandu University, Nepal, where the GESI diagnostic tool was developed. Its adoption in Bhutan provided an opportunity to examine and strengthen children's valued educational capabilities while promoting safer, more inclusive, and supportive learning environments in public schools.

The implementation involved several interconnected steps. First, the GESI diagnostic tool was reviewed and contextualised to align with Bhutan's cultural and educational context. Second, participating girls and boys were oriented to the concept of educational capabilities through interactive and collaborative engagement with the tool. Third, researchers conducted the baseline GESI diagnosis in selected schools to establish an initial reference point on children's experiences, perceptions, well-being, agency, and valued educational capabilities. Fourth, the baseline findings informed the design and implementation of school-based activities, programmes, policy provisions, and the LIKE Club intervention to strengthen GESI practices and promote children's well-being, agency, participation, and inclusion. Fifth, capacity-building activities were undertaken with students and teachers to foster teaching and learning environments conducive to transformative GESI practices grounded in children's valued educational capabilities.

Following the implementation of the LIKE Club intervention and related GESI activities, an endline assessment was conducted using the GESI diagnostic framework to examine changes in students' experiences and perceptions over the intervention period. The endline assessment provided an opportunity to compare findings with the baseline and identify areas of improvement, stability, and continuing gaps across different demographic groups and capability domains. The baseline–endline comparison therefore provides evidence of changes observed following the intervention, while recognising that changes may also be influenced by the broader school, social, and contextual environment. The endline findings are particularly useful for understanding how children's perceptions of well-being, agency, participation, equality, equity, and social inclusion evolved following their engagement with the LIKE Club and other GESI-focused activities.

The GESI framework encompasses four core dimensions: (a) gender equality, (b) equality, (c) equity, and (d) social inclusion**.** The framework was operationalised as a survey instrument to

generate evidence on children's lived experiences of GESI in their everyday school environments, including their perceptions of gender-responsive and socially inclusive practices. The assessment also examined four interrelated dimensions of children's capabilities: well-being freedom, well-being achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement**.** These dimensions provide a basis for understanding both children's perceived opportunities to experience and exercise valued capabilities and the extent to which they are able to translate those opportunities into actual experiences, choices, and achievements.

The baseline and endline assessments were conducted in five public schools in Samtse Dzongkhag**,** involving 200 students from Grades I–X. Based on the baseline findings, interventions including the LIKE Club, policy briefs, awareness materials, and teacher capacity-building sessions were implemented to strengthen GESI practices and create more supportive learning environments. The subsequent endline assessment generated evidence on the changes observed after the intervention period. Comparisons were examined across gender, grade, and ethnicity, as well as across the different capability domains, to identify patterns of progress and areas where challenges remained. These findings provide an evidence base for assessing the contribution of the intervention and for identifying areas requiring continued attention and strengthening.

A central feature of this innovation is its child-centred approach, which positions children not merely as beneficiaries but as active participants in identifying and reflecting on their own experiences of GESI. By focusing on the *beings and doings* that children value and aspire to achieve, the framework provides a basis for understanding whether school environments enable children to experience well-being, exercise agency, participate meaningfully, and develop their capabilities. The baseline assessment established the initial conditions, while the endline assessment provides evidence of changes following the implementation of the LIKE Club and related GESI activities. Together, the findings contribute to understanding how school-based interventions can support safer, more equitable, gender-responsive, and socially inclusive learning environments for children in Bhutan.

1.1 Objective of Baseline and Endline Assessment

The purpose of the baseline and endline assessment is to document and compare the status of GESI conditions in selected public schools of Samtse Dzongkhag before and after the implementation of the LIKE Club intervention and other planned GESI-focused activities. The assessment establishes a baseline reference point and examines subsequent changes in students' experiences, perceptions, and practices related to gender equality, equity, and social inclusion within their everyday school environment. The baseline–endline comparison provides evidence of changes observed following the implementation of LIKE Club activities, capacity-building initiatives, and related policy actions. It also identifies areas where progress has remained uneven across different demographic groups and capability domains, thereby providing evidence to assess how the intervention may have contributed to improvements in students' well-being, agency, participation, and experiences of inclusion.

A resource-based assessment approach is adopted because educational resources represent important institutional conditions through which GESI is experienced and exercised by children. Assessing the availability, satisfaction, and perceived importance of resources at baseline and endline helps identify changes in the provision and experience of these resources, as well as gaps between formal provision and students' lived experiences. This approach is particularly relevant to public community schools, where GESI is shaped not only by access to resources but also by how these resources are experienced, utilised, and valued by different groups of students. In this context,

the LIKE Club intervention provides a structured platform for promoting children's participation, agency, well-being, gender equality, equity, and social inclusion. The baseline and endline findings therefore provide evidence of changes observed during the intervention period, while also highlighting continuing gaps and areas requiring further attention to strengthen equitable, inclusive, and supportive school environments for diverse learners.

SECTION 2

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 Introduction to Capability approach, its components, meaning and importance

Sen (1999) introduced the Capability Approach (CA) as a framework for evaluating individual well-being. It was introduced to address the limitations of conventional welfare economics by focusing not merely on the resources people possess, but also on what individuals are actually able to do and be, which is referred to as their *functionings*.

In this regard, the perspective shifts focus from just access to resources or economic indicators to the actual opportunities people have to live meaningful lives. Capabilities can be further divided into basic and general types. Basic capabilities are those necessary for survival and escaping poverty, while general capabilities include broader aspects such as health, education, and social relationships (Robeyns, 2017). In the context of GESI, CA offers a valuable lens to evaluate not just formal access to services or rights, but the real freedoms that marginalised groups, especially women and girls, experience in their everyday lives.

In education, CA allows researchers to use it as an evaluative space for understanding the role of education in promoting human flourishing (Drèze & Sen, 2013; Hart, 2009; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007). Hart and Brando (2018) further echoed that CA allows researchers to move beyond an outcome−based understanding of schooling, allowing the researchers to focus on the processes whereby children flourish and the opportunities that the school offers children to be and to become what they value and aspire. Thus, CA provides alternative guidelines for shaping education policies that put the children (in all their facets) at the forefront.

Further, Kuklys and Robeyns (2005) argue that Sen's CA provides a valuable framework for assessing individual welfare and social conditions including a theoretical basis for analysing inequality, poverty, and public policy. They explain that CA allows well-being to be evaluated through two core concepts: functionings and capabilities.

Functionings refer to the actual "beings and doings" of a person. For example, such as being well-nourished, having shelter, or being mobile. These stand out from the resources used to achieve them (e.g., riding a bicycle versus owning one). In this context, Gasper (1997) emphasised that when evaluating well-being, varied and relevant elements need to be assessed including morbidity, mortality, adequate nourishment, mobility, happiness, self-respect, and participation in community life.

Capabilities, on the other hand, is a set of valuable functionings or opportunities a person may possess to achieve, a life they have reason to value. Different scholars have identified and classified varying sets of capabilities. These include:

- Nussbaum (2011) identifies capabilities such as bodily health, bodily integrity, senses, imagination and thought, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, other species, play, and control over one's environment. Her list offers a useful benchmark for identifying gender inequality and exclusion across societies. However, critics argue that this universal approach can sometimes overlook local meanings of well-being or the power dynamics that affect people's choices (Staveren, 2008).
- Clark (2005) classifies health, knowledge, freedom, employment, leisure, housing, environment, and income.
- Alkire (2002) adds dimensions such as education, living standards, empowerment, safety from violence, and relationships.
- Robeyns (2005) proposes additional capabilities such as political empowerment and material control. She argues that any capability list should meet several criteria including should be explicit, backed by a clear method, flexible in how general or specific it is, and as comprehensive as possible without oversimplifying human experience. This balanced approach is especially helpful for GESI within the Bhutanese context, as it supports both local relevance and careful, structured evaluation of gender and social inequalities.
- Within Bhutanese context, Ura et al. (2012) propose a multidimensional index to measure happiness, and it comprises domains such as psychological well-being, health, time use and balance, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standard.

Together, these approaches show how flexible and powerful the CA framework can be for understanding inequality. Sen's focus on context supports participatory and inclusive ways of identifying what matters to different groups. Nussbaum's list gives a clear standard for comparing inequality across places. Robeyns adds a practical, balanced method that works well for applied GESI research.

Although Sen propounded the concept of CA and emphasised the importance of capabilities, he deliberately avoided providing a fixed list as he felt that it should be left at the discretion of people concerned to determine their relevance and contextually appropriate capabilities.

In more recent work, Sen (2016) describes CA as an intellectual discipline which focuses on evaluating people's achievements and freedoms in terms of their real ability to do and be the things they have reason to value. He reiterates that CA is concerned with the quality of life individuals are able to achieve and the freedoms they enjoy in pursuing different ways of living.

Sen further expands this idea to include multiple capabilities such as literacy, health, and political freedom, emphasising the need to analyse various life domains.
In this context, he justifies that CA should be applied as a richer evaluative framework for assessing well-being on four main grounds:

1. **Diverse Needs for Resources:** Sen contends that individuals need different resources to achieve similar functionings. He illustrated that a person with dyslexia may require additional educational support. Thus, when evaluating such cases, assessments need to go beyond resource distribution to examine what people can actually achieve with those resources.
2. **Adaptive Preferences:** Sen also posits that people may adapt to adverse conditions and accordingly claim satisfaction even in undesirable circumstances. For example, a poorly equipped school claiming high performance. In such cases, evaluation must therefore include both subjective and objective conditions.
3. **Importance of Choice:** Sen reflects that the availability of valuable choices matters, even if they are not exercised. For instance, in the case of nutritional well-being, the experience of fasting voluntarily differs greatly from that of starving due to poverty, though both may appear nutritionally identical. In such circumstances, evaluation must consider both outcomes and the freedom to choose among them.
4. **Complexity of Human Life:** While happiness is an important measure of well-being, Sen contends that it should not be the sole criterion. He asserts that other aspects such as dignity, justice, and autonomy are equally significant. Although CA has its own strength, provision of flexibility and openness to multiple dimensions has also attracted criticism, providing avenues for scholars like Martha Nussbaum to propose structured lists of central capabilities.

2.2 Application of Capability Approach in Education

Following Sen's work, several scholars have applied the CA to education. Drèze and Sen (2013) and Hart (2009) used CA to examine the role of education in promoting human flourishing, asserting that education is central to the development of all human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 1999). Sen (1999) argues that education is a fundamental capability that enhances functionings and improves individuals' quality of life and well-being. Moreover, education fosters agency, enabling individuals to actively participate in the planning and conduct of their lives.

Agency, within the CA framework, is understood as a form of empowerment that enables individuals to pursue goals they have reason to value. For instance, equitable and quality education enhances individual capabilities, leading to informed decisions that positively influence personal, social, and professional lives.

Pham (2018) applied CA to evaluate Community-Driven Development (CDD) programmes by identifying capabilities relevant to poverty reduction, a core aim of CDD. This demonstrates the practical applicability of CA as an evaluative framework.

To sum up, CA has been employed as an evaluative tool to assess varied dimensions indicating its importance and usefulness as an evaluative framework.

2.3 Dimensions of Capability Approach

Sen contended that agency and well-being can be assessed through four categories of evaluative space which are classified into well-being freedom, well-being achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. These four categories form the evaluative space of human flourishing:

Table 1: Sen's space of evaluation of human flourishing

	Freedom	**Achievement**
Well-being	Well-being freedom - the freedom to achieve ways of living one has reason to value (reflecting capability)	Well-being achievement -ways of living that one has reason to value (constituting functionings)
Agency	Agency freedom - freedom to pursue goals with influence beyond oneself and that one has reason to value	Agency achievement - achieving goals with influence beyond oneself and that one has reason to value

Adopted from Hart and Brando (2018), p. 293

Well-being freedom refers to the range of substantial freedoms or capabilities an individual has to achieve the things that contribute to their well-being (Sen, 1992, p. 57). In contrast, well-being achievement encompasses the actual beings and doings or functionings that a person realises, which constitute their well-being. For example, when a student has access to quality education, supportive teachers, and a safe learning environment, they possess the capability to pursue meaningful learning and develop into a well-informed individual (Sen, 1985). Successfully graduating from school as a result of these supportive conditions reflects a well-being achievement, representing the realisation of valued functionings that contributes to their overall well-being (Sen, 1992, p. 57).

But human flourishing extends beyond well-being alone. Sen (1992) includes both agency freedom and agency achievement as fundamental dimensions of human development. Agency

freedom refers to the ability to act for one's valued goals and change the circumstance for oneself and one's community (Sen, 1992, p. 57). Agency achievement, on the other hand, is the actual realisation of those goals/objectives one has reason to value which may go beyond self-interest (Sen, 1992, pp. 56–57). For example, a teacher who chooses to campaign for gender equality, even when it does not directly benefit them, is exercising agency freedom. When that campaign leads to a tangible change in how girls are treated in schools, it represents an agency achievement.

According to Sen (1985, 1999, 2009), both freedom and personal values are crucial in evaluating quality of life. Evaluations must account not only for the outcomes but also for the processes by which those outcomes are achieved. Human flourishing, therefore, must encompass both well-being and agency, and reflect individual autonomy and diverse life goals. Hart and Brando (2018) argue that society must create conditions that allow individuals to freely choose and exercise their capabilities, provided they do not cause harm to others.

2.4 Summary

Therefore, a *capability set* refers to the bundle of *functionings*, the valuable "doings and beings" that a person can achieve to lead a good life. *Functionings* represent the realised outcomes or achievements that result when capabilities are put into action (Robeyns, 2005). Achieving these functionings requires *resources*, which are typically material or measurable inputs such as income. However, Sen (1992) emphasises that resources alone are insufficient to ensure that individuals attain their valued functionings.

Crucially, Robeyns (2017) points out that *conversion factors* play a central role in transforming resources into capabilities and capabilities into achieved functionings. These conversion factors encompass social, institutional, structural, and environmental preconditions that influence whether a person's internal capacities and potentials can be effectively exercised as real options and freedoms (Hart & Brando, 2018).

For example, in the context of a school children:

- **Personal conversion factors** refer to individual characteristics and competencies, such as the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively.
- **Social conversion factors** stem from structural elements like educational policies, cultural norms, and legal frameworks, for instance, the existence of inclusive support policies.
- **Environmental conversion factors** are physical aspects of the surroundings, such as access to a library, ICT facilities, and quality educational resources.

To genuinely enhance children's well-being and development, a balanced and holistic approach is required, one that not only addresses children's interests but also ensures the presence of enabling conditions that translate these interests into meaningful capabilities, competencies, and freedoms.

This study identified 16 capability indicators (Table 2) and assesses school children's view regarding the availability, importance, and satisfaction of resources associated with these indicators. In addition, it examined school children's' perceptions of agency and well-being using the four core CA metrics:

1. Well-being Freedom
2. Well-being Achievement
3. Agency Freedom
4. Agency Achievement

Table 2: Capability domain and its indicators

Resource Capability Domains	***Indicators***
Love, Care, and Respect	▪ Time spent with friends and family
Education	▪ Adequate number of teachers
	▪ Textbooks
	▪ Stationery
	▪ White/Blackboard
	▪ Uniform
Nutritional Well-being	▪ Provision of mid-day meal
Aspiration/ Freedom from Economic/ Non -Economic Exploitation	▪ Scholarship
Physical Health/Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Curriculum	▪ Safe drinking water
	▪ First aid
	▪ Playground
Bodily Integrity	▪ Separate toilets for girls and boys
	▪ Facilities inside the toilet
	▪ Provision of sanitary pads
	▪ Disabled-friendly infrastructure
Understand, Interpret/Plan, Imagine and Think	▪ Library
	▪ Computers
Religion and Identity	▪ Religious activities
Shelter & Environment	▪ Adequate school built-up area

	▪ Adequate classroom space
	▪ Adequate desks and benches
	▪ Electricity
Mental Well-being	▪ Grievance Mechanism
Social Relations	▪ Parent–teacher meeting
	▪ Child club
Autonomy/ Freedom from Economic/ Non -Economic Exploitation	▪ Free time
Participation/Mobility	▪ Extracurricular activities

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, literature highlights that CA serves as a valuable evaluative tool for assessing a wide range of factors, including welfare, health, poverty, income, education, and overall economic development. In this study, CA was applied to examine how schools promote gender equality and social inclusion by focusing on 16 capability indicators identified through a capability mapping. The overarching aim was to assess school children's well-being, agency freedom, and achievement which will eventually support GESI**.** Existing literature supports the view that identifying such capability indicators not only helps evaluate educational outcomes but also reveals the resources and gaps necessary for nurturing and advancing children's values, aspirations, and overall development.

SECTION 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The study was conducted using a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach in five selected research schools across Samtse Dzongkhag, located in the southern belt of Bhutan. The study aims to examine variations across grade, gender, ethnicity, and geographic context. The GESI diagnostic tool, developed by the lead country Nepal, was adapted to capture children's assessments of resources and their role in shaping children's well-being and agency, including both freedom and achievement dimensions.

A total of 40 students were selected from each school (20 boys and 20 girls), resulting in a balanced sample across gender. The participants were drawn from Grades I–X to ensure representation across primary to secondary levels of schooling. The participating children assessed 13 resource-based capability domains by rating the availability, satisfaction, and importance of resources within their school environment. In addition, 16 well-being and agency domains were evaluated across four dimensions: well-being freedom, well-being achievement, agency freedom, and agency achievement. This multidimensional assessment provides a comprehensive understanding of how institutional resources translate into children's lived experiences and opportunities.

3.3 Research Field Site

Samtse Dzongkhag (District) was selected as the research field site due to its diverse population, rich cultural heritage, varying socioeconomic conditions, and a mix of rural and urban school distributions.

The region is known for its ethnic diversity, with a mix of Lhotshampas, Drukpas, Adibashi, and Doyaps contributing to its unique cultural landscape. In addition, Samtse's varied topography and climate, ranging from lowland plains to foothills, offer diverse environmental settings, further enriching the context of the research. Five schools of Samtse Dzongkhag are selected as research sites and a map showing school location and its background descriptions are provided below:

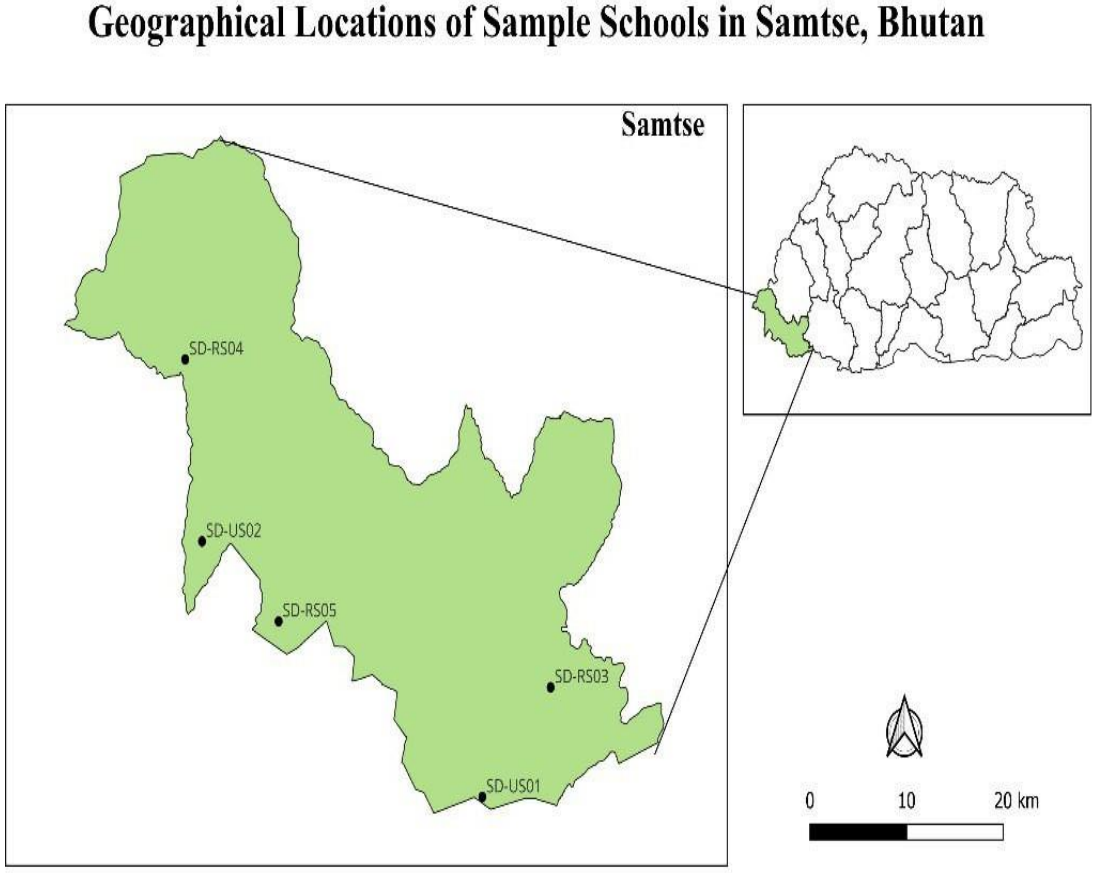

Figure 1: A Map of showing the study site and the selected samples

3.4 School Background

3.4.1 Gomtu Higher Secondary School

Gomtu Higher Secondary School, established in 1983, offers a complete education pathway from pre-primary through Grade 12. Its vision, of academic excellence, community service, leadership by example, and international-mindedness, shape the school's planning and execution of both academic and co-curricular activities.Currently, it has a total of 54 teaching staff (35 male and 19 female), 1002 children (475 male and 527 female), a dedicated male school counsellor, and 12 support staff (9 male and 3 female). The entire school community remains committed to nurturing an environment where every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to thrive.

3.4.2 Peljorling Higher Secondary School

Peljorling Higher Secondary School, established in 1955, is located in the lower Peljorling area under Tashicholing Gewog, Tashicholing Dungkhag, in Samtse Dzongkhag. As of 2025, the school caters to 1,528 children (767 boys and 761 girls). While it offers boarding facilities, the majority of school children are day scholars, comprising 577 boys and 563 girls. The school has 86 teachers (42 male and 44 female). The school provides education from Pre-Primary (PP) to Grade 12, offering all three streams: Arts, Commerce, and Science for higher secondary levels.

3.4.3 Tashithang Middle Secondary School

Tashithang Middle Secondary School (MSS), originally established as Panbari Primary School in 1982, began as a community primary school with limited staff and students, supported by local efforts. The school has a current enrolment of 652 school children (322 boys and 300 girls), is supported by a dedicated team of 30 teachers, 7 supporting staff, 5 cooks, 2 caretakers, and 2 sweepers.

3.3.1 Tendruk Central School

Established in 1978, Tendruk Central School is a Higher Secondary School offering education from Pre-Primary (PP) to grades 12. The school is located on a 20.328-acre campus, providing a conducive learning environment for its 1,171 students comprising 591 boys and 580 girls. The school operates a boarding facility that accommodates 185 boys and 175 girls, including 9 boys and 13 girls under its inclusive education programmes, affirming its commitment to equity and support for diverse learners. With a total of 73 teachers (45 male and 28 female), the school ensures that students receive quality instruction and guidance. Recognised as an inclusive school, Tendruk Central School stands out for embracing diversity and promoting equal learning opportunities for all students.

3.3.1 Yoeseltse Higher Secondary School

Yoeseltse Higher Secondary, originally established in 1961 as a primary school in Guamauney, Samtse, caters to 587 school children, including 304 males and 285 females. The dedicated teacher team comprises 45 teachers (32 male and 13 female), who work tirelessly to uphold the school's standards and nurture each learner. Despite its remote location and humble beginnings, the school continues to flourish, standing tall as a symbol of perseverance, growth, and holistic education.

3.4 Sample selection and justification

The study employed random sampling to select 5 schools and 200 students across Grades 1-10 as the research sites and participants. The selection process was designed to capture a diverse array of geographical, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, ensuring comprehensive representation across various socio-cultural contexts. Additionally, considerations were made to ensure a balanced representation of both rural and urban settings, and a diverse range of backgrounds, including variables such as parental education and financial standing. Each school selected 40 students consisting of 20 girls and boys.

3.5 Respondent's Profile

This section presents respondents' demographic information by gender, grade, ethnicity, religion, father, and mother's occupation.

3.5.1 Gender

As shown in Figure 2, 50% of the respondents are male, while 49% are female. A very small proportion, 1% (1 respondent), falls under the "other" gender category.

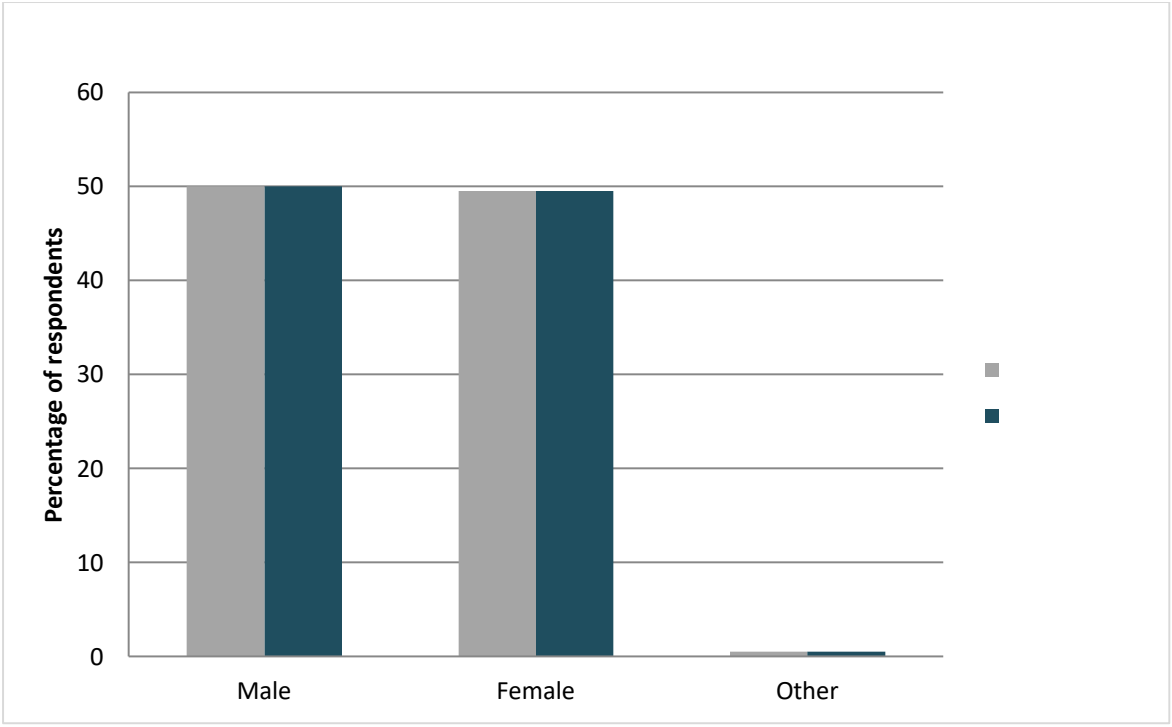

Figure 2: Respondents' Gender

3.5.2 Grades

Figure 3 presents the distribution of respondents by grade level. As indicated, 60% (120) of the respondents are from primary school (Grades-I-VI), while 20% (40) are from lower secondary (Grades VII-VIII) and 20% (40) are from middle secondary schools (Grades IX-X).

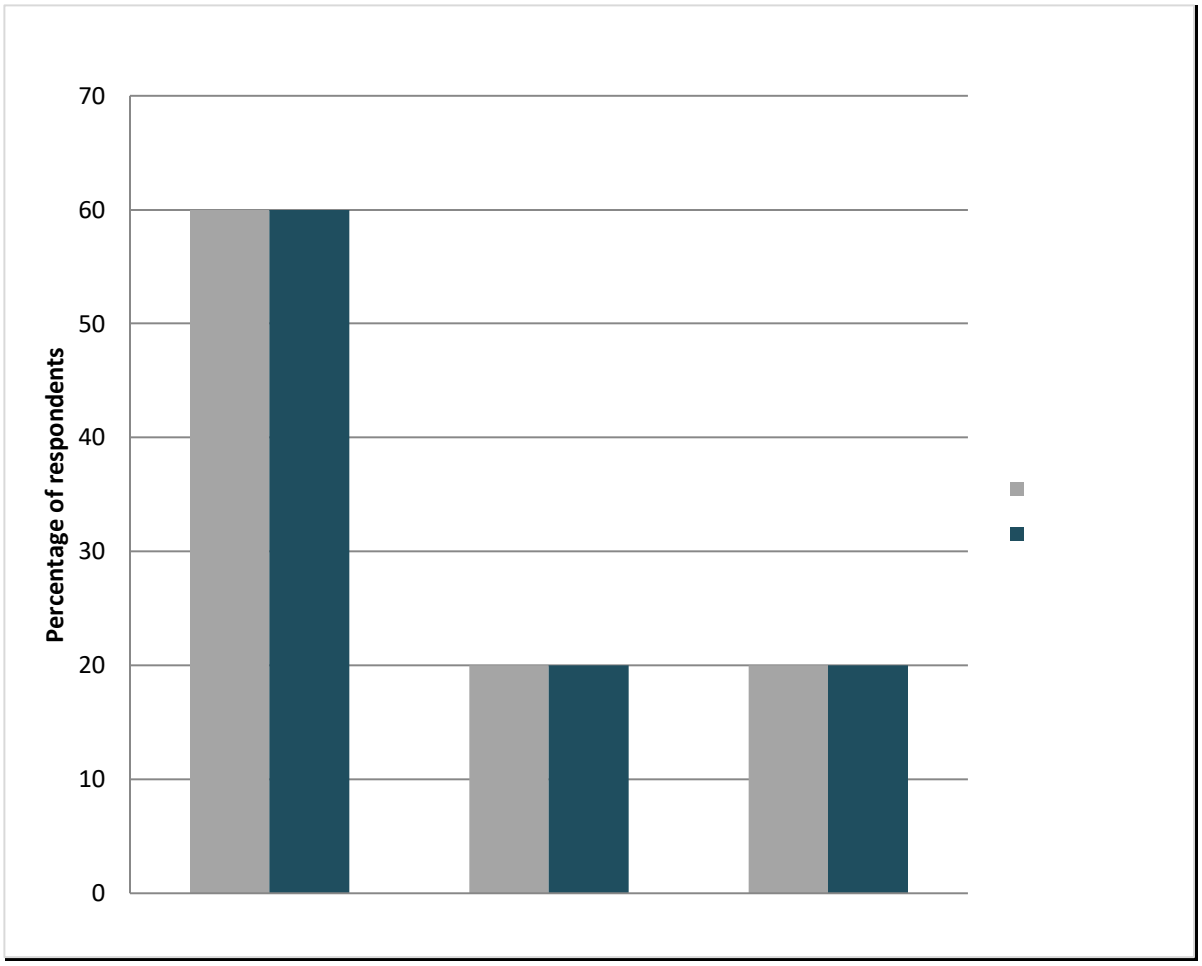

Figure 3: Respondent's Grade

3.5.3 Ethnicity

Figure 5 shows distribution of respondents by ethnicity. According to the figure, Lhotshampa constituted the largest ethnic group at both baseline and endline, increasing from **87 (44.2%) to 99 (49.5%)**, followed by Sharchop, which increased from **46 (23.4%) to 54 (27.0%)**. In contrast, the proportion of Ngalop respondents decreased from **39 (19.8%)** at baseline to **16 (8.0%)** at endline **(Fig. 4)**. The remaining ethnic groups (Other, Adibashi, Khengpa, Kurteop, and Bumthap), each constituted smaller proportions of the sample, ranging from **0.5%** to **6.1%** at baseline and **1.5%** to **4.5%** at endline. Overall, the sample comprised respondents from diverse ethnic backgrounds, although the distribution was dominated by Lhotshampa and Sharchop respondents at both measurement points.

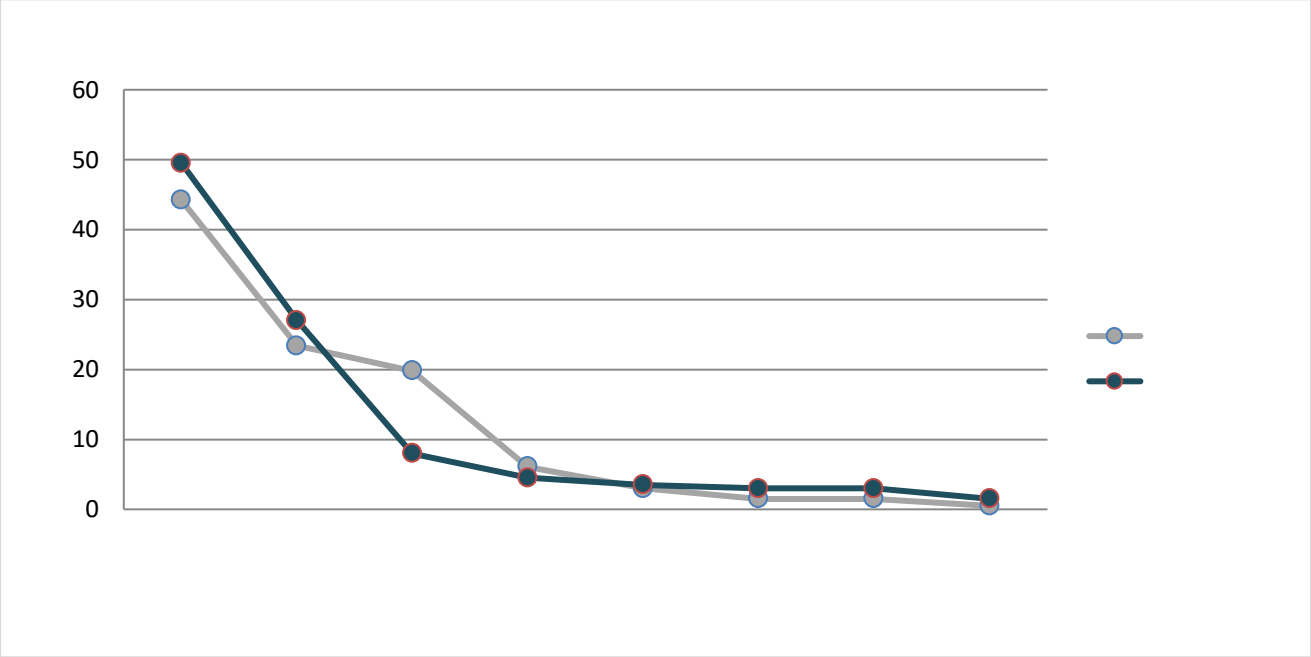

Figure 4: Respondent's Ethnicity

3.5.4 Religion

Figure 5 presents the religious composition of the respondents at baseline and endline**.** Buddhists constituted the largest proportion at both baseline and endline, increasing from **57.0%** to **64.5%**. The proportion of Hindu respondents remained unchanged at **31.5%** at both time points. Christian respondents decreased from **9.5%** at baseline to **2.5%** at endline, while respondents reporting Other religions increased from **0%** to **1.5%**. Overall, the sample was predominantly Buddhist, followed by Hindu respondents, with smaller proportions representing other religions.

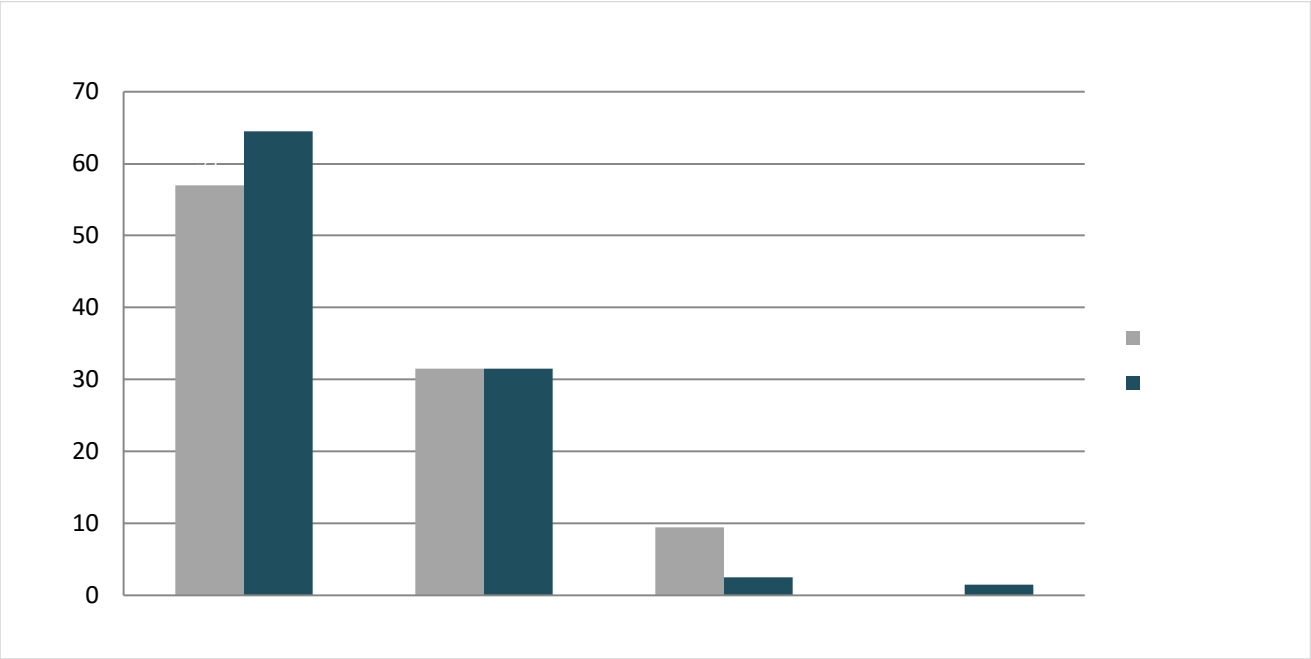

Figure 5: Respondent's Religion

3.5.5 Father's Occupation

Figure 7 indicates the distribution of respondents by their father's occupation at baseline and endline. Farmers constituted the largest occupational group, increasing substantially from **34.5%** at baseline to **55.5%** at endline. In contrast, respondents whose fathers were classified under Other occupations decreased from **35.5% to 26.0%**. The proportion of respondents with teacher fathers declined from **11.0%** to **6.0%**, while drivers decreased from **6.5%** to **1.5%** and shopkeepers from **5.5%** to **2.0%**. Civil servants increased from **5.0%** to **8.5%**, while respondents reporting no father decreased from **2.0%** to **0.5%**. Overall, the endline sample had a notably higher proportion of respondents whose fathers were farmers, with smaller proportions across most of the other occupational categories.

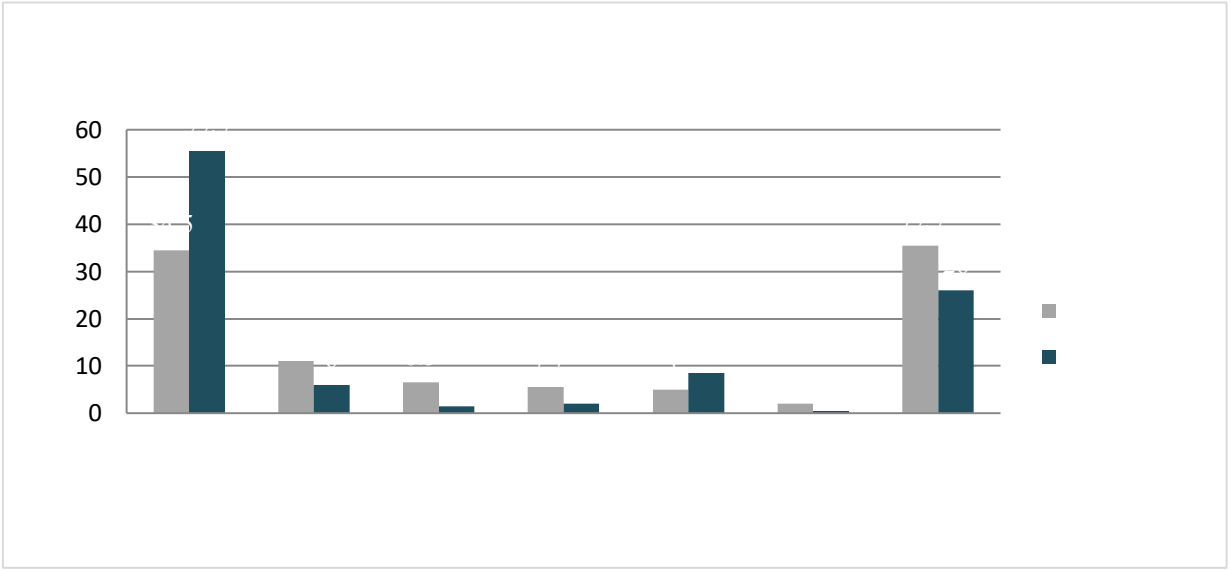

Figure 6: Father's Occupation

3.5.6 Mother's Occupation

Figure 7 presents the distribution of respondents by their mother's occupation at baseline and endline. The proportion of respondents whose mothers were farmers increased substantially from **18.5%** at baseline to **48.5%** at endline, while those **with** housewife mothers decreased from **38.0%** to **0%**. The proportion with civil servant mothers also increased from **4.5%** to **17.0%**. In contrast, corporate employees decreased from **9.0%** to **0%**, and teachers decreased from **4.5%** to **0%**. Respondents reporting Other occupations increased from **23.0%** to **34.5%**, while the proportion reporting no mother decreased from **2.5%** to **0%**. Overall, the endline sample shows a marked shift towards respondents whose mothers were engaged in farming and other occupations.

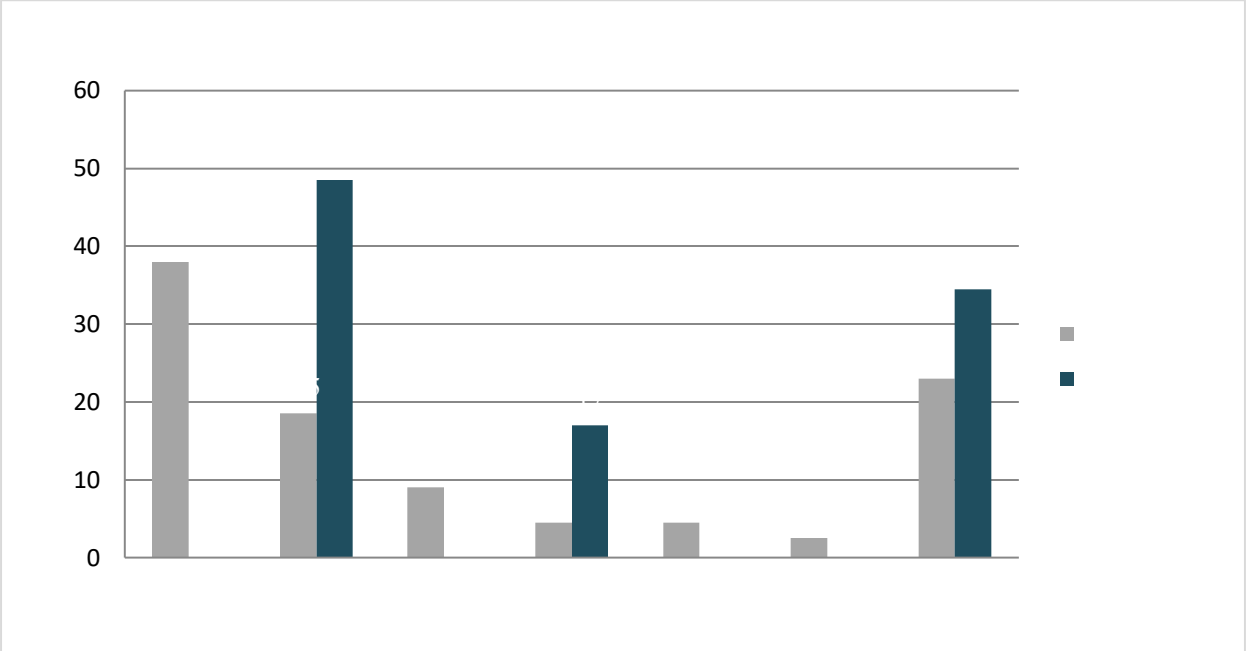

Figure 7: Mother's Occupation

3.6 Data Collection

Data were collected using the GESI diagnostic survey tool. The tool focused on assessing children's perceptions of school resources. The tools also focused on capturing students' valuation of capability indicators.

The GESI diagnostic survey tool comprised Section A, which included demographic information, assessment of school resources, and children's valued educational capabilities. For school resources, 13 capability indicators were included: 1) Love, care and respect, 2) Education, 3) Nutritional well-being, 4) Aspiration and freedom from economic/non-economic exploitation, 5) Physical health and GESI curriculum, 6) Bodily integrity and GESI curriculum,
7) The ability to understand, interpret, plan/imagine and think, 8) Religion and identity, 9) Shelter and environment, 10) Mental well-being, 11) Social relations, 12) Autonomy and freedom from exploitation, and 13) Participation and mobility with a total of 28 items.

Children's valuation of well-being and agency for the 16 indicators were also assessed. In doing so, the capability indicators comprised 130 items. The framework was structured around four core well-being metrics: i) Well-being Freedom; ii) Well-being Achievement; iii) Agency Freedom; and iv) Agency Achievement. The capability indicators included: 1) Love, care and respect, 2) Education, 3) Nutritional well-being, 4) Aspiration, 5) Physical health, 6) Bodily integrity, 7) The ability to understand, interpret, plan/imagine and think, 8) Religion and identity, 9) Shelter and environment, 10) Mental well-being, 11) Social relations, 12) Autonomy, 13) Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation, 14) Participation, 15) Mobility, and 16) Gender Equality and Social Inclusion curriculum.

The tool was first administered in 13 schools in Nepal, which helped establish its reliability. Additionally, to contextualise the tool, the GESI diagnostic was adapted and tested for reliability, yielding a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.99, showing a highly internal consistency.

Within the Bhutanese context, two teacher participants from each respective school were involved in the baseline data collection. They administered the GESI diagnostic survey tool to children at their convenience, typically in three groups (Grades 1-3, 4-7, 8-10), with each session lasting between one to three hours. The survey duration varied according to children's grade and comprehension levels. Children ranging from Grades 1-3 and 4-7 required more time to complete the survey due to difficulties in comprehending some of the survey items while those in grades 8–10 required just over an hour, indicating children with higher comprehension levels completed the surveys in a shorter time.

3.7 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to aggregate students' perceptions of the availability, satisfaction, and importance of resources for advancing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in schools. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise demographic data and to interpret children's perceptions of the resources examining their perceptions to availability, level of satisfaction, and perceived importance. To compare demographic variables such as gender, age, and location with capability indicators across different schools, within-school mean analyses were conducted. Furthermore, to assess children's perceived levels of capabilities (example, love, care, and respect) for significant social groups (parents, teachers, elders, juniors, and friends), descriptive statistics were used. The analysis involved five schools in Samtse Dzongkhag, Bhutan. These capabilities were evaluated using a 0–10 scale across 16 variables, combining dimensions of Well-being, Agency, Freedom, and Achievement. The descriptive analysis included: 1) Measures of Central Tendency (mean). Graphs were created based on the analysis.

3.8 Ethical considerations

When conducting the study, ethical considerations for the participants were carefully observed. It was essential to ensure their safety, confidentiality, and overall well-being (Efron & Ravid, 2013). In this research, throughout the research process, the ethical principles of research were followed. Principals of five schools in Samtse Dzongkhags were contacted and asked for permission to approach school children of Grades 1-10. In addition, the GESI diagnostic tool included a dedicated section on informed consent, ensuring that participants were made fully aware of the study's purpose, their rights, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Teachers administering the survey explained the contents clearly, and school children were given the option to opt out without any consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality of all responses were maintained throughout the process. Data was stored properly and participants' anonymity was taken into account in the processing of the data.

SECTION 4

CHILDREN'S ASSESSMENT OF CAPABILITY DOMAINS AND ITS INDICATORS

4.1 Children's Assessment of Availability, Satisfaction, and Importance Across Capability Domains: Baseline–Endline Comparison

This section examines changes in children's perceptions of availability, satisfaction, and importance across the 13 capability domains between the baseline and endline assessments. The comparison provides insight into whether children experienced changes in the availability of supportive conditions, their satisfaction with those conditions, and the value they attached to different aspects of their educational experience.

The baseline and endline findings are particularly important from a Capability Approach perspective because the presence of resources alone does not necessarily indicate that children are able to convert those resources into meaningful educational opportunities and achievements. Changes in availability and satisfaction therefore provide an indication of whether school-level conditions became more supportive of children's valued capabilities, while changes in importance provide insight into how children's priorities and perceptions evolved during the intervention period.

Overall, the comparison shows substantial improvement in availability and satisfaction across most capability domains**,** although the pattern is not uniform. The strongest increases are observed in Education, Shelter and Environment, Bodily Integrity, Autonomy, Physical Health, and Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think. At the same time, some domains show declining availability or importance, particularly Mental Well-being, Nutritional Wellbeing, and Religion and Identity**.** These variations suggest that the intervention did not affect all capability domains in the same way and that children's experiences continue to be shaped by the specific conditions and contexts of their schools.

4.1.1 Overall Changes in Availability

The endline results indicate a substantial improvement in the perceived availability of resources and conditions across most capability domains.

The most notable increases were observed in Shelter and Environment, which increased from 1,318 at baseline to 1,740 at endline (+422), and Education, which increased from 1,290 to 1,708 (+418). These are particularly important changes because both domains had relatively low availability scores at baseline. The improvement suggests that children perceived greater access to supportive educational and physical environments by the endline.

Similarly, Bodily Integrity increased from 1,425 to 1,668 (+243), while Social Relations increased from 1,515 to 1,731 (+216). Autonomy also increased considerably, from 1,547 to 1,689 (+142), as did Physical Health, from 1,609 to 1,759 (+150). These changes are particularly relevant to GESI because they relate not only to physical and institutional provisions but also to children's ability to participate, exercise agency, maintain relationships, and experience safe and supportive school environments.

Other positive changes were observed in Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think (+134), Love, Care, and Respect (+137), Participation/Mobility (+89), and Aspiration (+87).

However, availability did not increase across every domain. Mental Well-being declined substantially from 1,725 to 1,518 (-207), while Nutritional Wellbeing declined from 1,775 to 1,712 (-63) and

Religion and Identity declined slightly from 1,769 to 1,756 (-13). These declines warrant further qualitative investigation because they may reflect changing expectations, contextual conditions, or challenges that are not fully captured by the quantitative scores.

Overall, the availability results suggest that the project period was associated with greater perceived availability in most capability domains, particularly those related to educational provision, physical environment, bodily integrity, autonomy, and social relations.

4.1.2 Changes in Satisfaction

The changes in satisfaction are particularly encouraging. Unlike availability, which reflects whether children perceive conditions or resources to be present, satisfaction provides a stronger indication of whether children feel that these conditions are meaningful and responsive to their needs.

The largest increase occurred in Bodily Integrity, where satisfaction rose from 1,318 at baseline to 1,683 at endline (+365). Autonomy also recorded a substantial increase, from 1,469 to 1,765 (+296). These changes are important because both domains were among the areas with considerable dissatisfaction at baseline.

Similarly, satisfaction increased substantially in Shelter and Environment (+462), Education (+408), Physical Health (+178), Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think (+220), Love, Care, and Respect (+133), Participation/Mobility (+133), and Social Relations (+149).

These improvements suggest that the changes were not limited to the provision of resources. In several domains, children also reported more positive experiences of those provisions. This is particularly significant from a CA perspective because it suggests an improvement in the conversion of institutional resources into experiences that children value.

A notable exception is Religion and Identity, where satisfaction declined from 1,744 to 1,708 (-36). Nutritional Wellbeing, however, recorded a modest increase in satisfaction (+32), despite its decline in availability. Mental Well-being also showed a notable increase in satisfaction, from 1,655 to 1,712 (+57), despite a decline in perceived availability. This is an important finding: it suggests that availability and satisfaction do not necessarily move together. Children may become more satisfied even when they perceive fewer resources, possibly because the quality, relevance, accessibility, or use of existing provisions has improved.

4.1.3 Changes in Importance: Changing Priorities and Perceptions

The importance scores show a different pattern from availability and satisfaction. Unlike the baseline, where importance was generally higher than satisfaction, several domains show a reduction in the importance assigned to particular capabilities at endline**.**

The largest decline in importance occurred for Aspiration, which decreased from 1,807 to 1,697 (-110), followed by Bodily Integrity (-101), Social Relations (-99), Nutritional Wellbeing (-87), and Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think (-70). These declines should not necessarily be interpreted as reduced value or concern. Rather, they may indicate that children's perceptions and priorities changed as their experiences and opportunities changed during the intervention.

Importantly, Love, Care, and Respect showed a substantial increase in importance, from 1,556 to 1,801 (+245). Shelter and Environment also increased considerably (+304), while Education increased by 245

points. These changes suggest that children increasingly recognised the importance of supportive relationships, learning environments, and physical school conditions.

The findings therefore indicate that children's priorities are not static. The CA recognises children as agents who evaluate what they have reason to value. Changes in importance may therefore reflect changes in children's awareness, experiences, aspirations, or understanding of what contributes to their wellbeing.

4.1.4 Narrowing Gaps Between Satisfaction and Importance

A particularly useful way of interpreting the baseline and endline findings is to examine the gap between importance and satisfaction**.**

At baseline, large gaps existed in several domains. For example, the gap between importance and satisfaction was: Bodily Integrity**,** (466 points); Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think **(**293 points); Social Relations **(**282 points); Physical Health **(**279 points); Autonomy **(**256 points); Shelter and Environment **(**239 points); and Education **(**235 points).

By endline, these gaps had narrowed considerably. The gap for Bodily Integrity reduced from 466 points to 0, with satisfaction and importance both reaching 1,683. The gap for Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think reduced from 293 to only 3 points. Similarly, the gap for Autonomy declined from 256 to -40, meaning that satisfaction slightly exceeded importance at endline. The gap for **Education** declined from 235 to 72 points, while Shelter and Environment declined from 239 to 81 points**.** Social Relations declined from 282 to 34 points, and Physical Health declined from 279 to 85 points**.**

These are important changes. They suggest that several domains that were highly valued but comparatively under-realised at baseline became more closely aligned with children's experiences at endline**.**

The change is particularly striking for Bodily Integrity, Autonomy, Social Relations, Education, and Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think. These domains are closely connected with GESI because they concern children's safety, agency, participation, relationships, learning opportunities, and ability to exercise valued ways of being and doing.

4.1.5 Capability Domains Showing Strongest Improvement

Taken together, the baseline and endline comparison identifies several domains where improvement is particularly evident.

Education increased substantially in both availability (+418) and satisfaction (+408), while its importance also increased (+245). This represents one of the strongest overall improvements and suggests that children experienced meaningful improvements in educational conditions.

Shelter and Environment also showed substantial gains in availability (+422), satisfaction (+462), and importance (+304). The improvement suggests that the physical and environmental dimensions of schooling became more positively experienced and more valued by children.

Bodily Integrity demonstrated one of the most significant transformations. Availability increased by 243 points and satisfaction increased by 365 points, while the large baseline gap between importance and satisfaction was eliminated at endline.

Autonomy also showed strong improvement, particularly in satisfaction, which increased by 296 points. Given the importance of children's agency within the CVEC framework, this is a particularly significant finding.

Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think showed increases of 134 points in availability and 220 points in satisfaction, while the importance–satisfaction gap declined from 293 points to only 3 points.

These changes suggest that the project may have contributed not only to improved perceptions of institutional provisions but also to greater opportunities for children to experience agency, participation, learning, safety, and supportive environments.

4.1.6 Domains Requiring Continued Attention

Despite the overall positive movement, several domains require continued attention.

Mental Well-being presents an important area of concern. Availability declined by 207 points, despite satisfaction increasing by 57 points. This discrepancy suggests that children may have experienced improvements in how existing support was experienced even though they perceived fewer available resources or opportunities. Given the importance of mental wellbeing to children's educational participation, this domain requires further qualitative exploration.

Nutritional Wellbeing also experienced a decline in availability (-63) and importance (-87), although satisfaction increased slightly (+32). Similarly, Religion and Identity showed small declines in availability (-13), satisfaction (-36), and importance (-17).

These findings demonstrate that positive change is not uniform across all capability domains. Rather than interpreting the declines simply as project failure, they should be examined alongside qualitative evidence to understand the contextual factors influencing children's perceptions.

4.1.7 Summary

The baseline and endline comparison presents a generally positive picture of change across the capability domains. The most notable improvement is not simply that scores increased, but that the relationship between what children value and what they experience became more closely aligned in several important domains**.**

At baseline, children frequently reported that particular capabilities were highly important but were not adequately realised in their everyday school experiences. By endline, the gap between importance and satisfaction had narrowed substantially in several domains, particularly Bodily Integrity, Autonomy, Education, Social Relations, Shelter and Environment, Physical Health, and Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think**.**

This pattern is consistent with the CA, which distinguishes between the availability of resources and children's actual opportunities to achieve valued functionings**.** The improvements in satisfaction suggest that institutional provisions may increasingly be converting into experiences that children find meaningful.

The findings also highlight the importance of agency and context. The strong improvement in Autonomy, Social Relations, Bodily Integrity, and the ability to Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think suggests movement beyond resource provision towards dimensions of children's participation, agency, relationships, and lived experiences.

At the same time, the decline in availability for Mental Well-being and the mixed movement in Nutritional Wellbeing and Religion and Identity demonstrate that capability development is neither linear nor uniform. Children's experiences remain influenced by wider school, social, cultural, and institutional conditions.

Overall, the endline findings indicate a strengthening of several children's valued educational capabilities, particularly in areas associated with agency, participation, education, safety, physical environment, relationships, and learning. The findings provide quantitative evidence of change, while the qualitative evidence from LIKE Club monitoring, school activities, CVEC campaigns, and children's experiences can further explain how and why these changes occurred**.**

4.2 Children's Assessment of the Capability Domains: Baseline–Endline Comparison

Table 4 presents the children's assessment of selected capability domains of baseline and endline across three dimensions: availability, satisfaction, and importance**.** The table includes capability domains with two or more indicators; domains represented by single or overlapping indicators are not presented. Comparing the baseline and endline scores provides an indication of whether children perceived changes in the availability of school-based resources, their satisfaction with these provisions, and the importance they attached to them.

Overall, the comparison shows considerable variation across capability domains and indicators**.** While several indicators demonstrate improvements in perceived availability and satisfaction at endline, others show declining satisfaction despite relatively high or improved availability. This distinction is important because an increase in the availability of a resource does not necessarily result in a corresponding increase in children's satisfaction. From a capability perspective, this suggests that the provision of institutional resources is only one aspect of enabling children to convert resources into meaningful educational opportunities and valued outcomes. The endline findings therefore provide an opportunity to examine not only whether resources are available, but also whether children perceive them as adequate and responsive to their needs.

Table 4: Children's Assessment of the Capability Domains

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domains/Indicators	***Availability***	***Satisfaction***	***Importance***	***Avail.***	***Satis.***	***Impt.***
Education						
Adequate number of teachers	1556	1566	1856	1710	1714	1773
Textbooks	1433	1446	1796	1682	1668	1784
Stationery	1436	1501	1807	1695	1687	1737
White/Blackboard	1596	1522	1828	1706	1693	1742
Uniform	1718	1678	1834	1706	1699	1790
Physical Health						
Safe drinking water	1619	1587	1875	1803	1710	1763
First aid	1659	1566	1843	1702	1685	1788
Playground	1549	1410	1682	1775	1700	1803
Bodily Integrity						
Separate toilets for girls and boys	1832	1571	1837	1518	1712	1678
Facilities inside the toilet	1161	1098	1748	1758	1520	1528

Provision of sanitary pads	1490	1412	1807	1704	1738	1801
Disabled-friendly infrastructure	1218	1189	1744	1689	1765	1725
UIPIT						
Library	1645	1590	1769	1723	1771	1714
Computers	1590	1444	1851	1780	1704	1767
Shelter & Environment						
Adequate school built-up area	1573	1461	1809	1662	1740	1754
Adequate classroom space	1682	1606	1868	1807	1676	1799
Adequate desks and benches	1695	1606	1860	1702	1685	1788
Electricity	1642	1503	1832	1775	1700	1803
Social Relations						
Parent–teacher meeting	1820	1786	1873	1758	1520	1528
Child club	1210	1176	1653	1704	1738	1801

4.2.1 Education

The Education domain shows mixed changes between baseline and endline. The availability score for an adequate number of teachers increased from **1556** to **1710**, while satisfaction increased from **1566** to **1714**. Importance also increased from **1856** to **1773**. The increase in availability and satisfaction suggests an improvement in children's experience of teacher provision, although the continued gap between satisfaction and importance indicates that having teachers available does not necessarily mean that children consider the provision fully adequate.

Textbooks show a rise in availability from **1433** to **1682** and satisfaction from **1446** to **1668**, while importance declined slightly from **1796** to **1784**. A similar pattern is observed for stationery, where availability increased from **1436** to **1695** and satisfaction from **1501** to **1687**, while importance declined from **1807** to **1737**. These changes suggest a notable improvement in children's perceptions of access to learning materials. The narrowing gap between availability/satisfaction and importance at endline may indicate that the provision of basic learning materials became more responsive to children's expectations.

White/blackboards present a somewhat different pattern. Availability declined from **1596** to **1706** while satisfaction increased from **1522** to **1693** and importance declined from **1828** to **1742**. Thus, children reported better availability and satisfaction at endline, although the importance score remained higher than both experienced dimensions.

Uniforms also show improvement in availability, from **1718** to **1706**, while satisfaction increased from **1678** to **1699** and importance declined from **1834** to **1790**. Overall, the Education domain suggests that several material and instructional resources were perceived more positively at endline, although gaps between what children value and what they experience remain.

4.2.2 Physical Health

The Physical Health domain demonstrates particularly notable improvements in perceived availability and satisfaction. Safe drinking water increased in availability from **1619** to **1803**, while satisfaction increased from **1587** to **1710**. Although the importance score declined from **1875** to **1763**, it remained

higher than satisfaction. This suggests that children experienced improved access to drinking water at endline, but the provision continued to be an important aspect of their school experience.

First aid similarly shows an increase in availability from **1659** to **1702** and satisfaction from **1566 to 1685**, accompanied by a decline in importance from **1843** to **1788**. The improvement in satisfaction is particularly noteworthy because it suggests that children's experiences of health-support services became more favourable by endline.

The most pronounced improvement within this domain is observed for the **playground**, where availability increased from **1549** to **1775** and satisfaction from **1410** to **1700**. Importance also increased from **1682** to **1803**. This indicates that playground provision improved substantially while children simultaneously attached greater importance to it. The finding is significant from a capability perspective because opportunities for play are not merely additional facilities but can contribute to children's physical wellbeing, social interaction, and broader development.

4.2.3 Bodily Integrity

The Bodily Integrity domain reveals a more complex pattern. The availability of separate toilets for girls and boys declined from **1832** to **1518**, while satisfaction increased from **1571** to **1712** and importance declined from **1837** to **1678**. The divergence between availability and satisfaction suggests that children's assessment may not be explained simply by the physical presence of separate facilities; their satisfaction may also reflect improvements in usability, management, or other aspects of the school environment.

Facilities inside toilets show a substantial increase in availability from **1161** to **1758** and satisfaction from **1098** to **1520**, although importance declined from **1748** to **1528**. This represents one of the clearest improvements in the domain and suggests that children perceived better provision of internal toilet facilities at endline.

Similarly, provision of sanitary pads increased in availability from **1490** to **1704** and satisfaction from **1412** to **1738**, while importance declined slightly from **1807** to **1801**. The increase in satisfaction is particularly important because menstrual hygiene facilities can influence girls' comfort, dignity, participation, and continued engagement in schooling.

Disabled-friendly infrastructure also shows an improvement in availability, from **1218** to **1689**, and satisfaction, from **1189** to **1765**, while importance declined slightly from **1744** to **1725**. The substantial increase in satisfaction suggests improvement in children's perceptions of accessibility. Nevertheless, because inclusive infrastructure is directly connected to equitable participation, continued attention to accessibility remains important.

4.2.4 UIPIT (Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think)

The UIPIT domain shows improvement in both availability and satisfaction for the two indicators. Library availability increased from **1645** to **1723**, while satisfaction increased from **1590** to **1771**. Importance, however, declined from **1769** to **1714**. The increase in satisfaction is particularly notable, as it suggests that children experienced the library as more adequate or useful at endline.

Computers show a similar increase in availability, from **1590** to **1780**, and satisfaction, from **1444** to **1704**. Importance declined from **1851** to **1767**, although it remained higher than both availability and satisfaction. The substantial increase in satisfaction indicates an improvement in children's experience

of access to digital resources. However, the continuing gap between satisfaction and importance suggests that digital resources remain an area where children expect more.

Taken together, the UIPIT findings suggest that access to resources supporting information acquisition, independent learning, and cognitive development improved by endline. However, the findings also indicate the need to move beyond the physical provision of computers and libraries towards ensuring that these resources are consistently accessible and meaningfully integrated into children's learning.

4.2.5 Shelter and Environment

The Shelter and Environment domain generally shows improvements in availability and, in several cases, satisfaction. Adequate school built-up area increased in availability from **1573** to **1662** and in satisfaction from **1461** to **1740**, while importance declined from **1809** to **1754**. The substantial increase in satisfaction suggests that children perceived the physical school environment more positively at endline.

Adequate classroom space shows an increase in availability from **1682** to **1807**, while satisfaction increased from **1606** to **1676** and importance declined slightly from **1868** to **1799**. This suggests improvement in the physical learning environment, although satisfaction continues to remain below the importance attached to classroom space.

Adequate desks and benches show a small increase in availability from **1695** to **1702**, while satisfaction increases from **1606** to **1685** and importance declines from **1860** to **1788**. Electricity shows a more substantial increase in availability, from **1642** to **1775**, and satisfaction, from **1503** to **1700**, while importance declines from **1832** to **1803**.

Overall, the endline results suggest that children experienced improvements in several aspects of the physical school environment. The increase in satisfaction is particularly important because it indicates that improvements were not limited to the physical presence of infrastructure but were also reflected in children's perceptions of their adequacy.

4.2.6 Social Relations

The Social Relations domain presents a contrasting pattern between formal adult–child engagement and opportunities for children's own participation. Parent–teacher meetings show a decline in availability from **1820** to **1758** and a substantial decline in satisfaction from **1786 to 1520**, while importance also declined from **1873** to **1528**. The decline in satisfaction is noteworthy and suggests that although parent–teacher meetings remained an established mechanism, children perceived their value or effectiveness less positively at endline.

In contrast, child clubs show substantial improvements. Availability increased from **1210** to **1704**, satisfaction increased from **1176** to **1738**, and importance increased from **1653** to **1801**. This is one of the strongest positive changes across the table. The simultaneous increase in availability, satisfaction, and importance suggests that opportunities for children to participate in organised groups became more prominent and valued at endline.

This finding is particularly significant from a capability perspective because child clubs may provide opportunities for agency, participation, social relations, leadership, and voice. The improvement therefore extends beyond the provision of a physical resource and points towards a potentially stronger enabling environment for children's active participation in school life.

4.2.7 Cross-Domain Interpretation

The baseline and endline comparison demonstrates that changes in children's experiences cannot be understood simply in terms of whether a school resource is available. Across several domains, availability and satisfaction increased together, suggesting that improvements in provision were accompanied by more positive experiences. This is evident particularly in playgrounds, toilet facilities, sanitary pads, disabled-friendly infrastructure, computers, classroom space, electricity, and child clubs.

At the same time, some indicators demonstrate a divergence between availability and satisfaction, showing that greater provision does not automatically translate into greater satisfaction. This distinction is important because capability development depends on the extent to which children can effectively use and benefit from available resources. A school may, for example, provide computers, toilets, or learning materials, but children's capabilities may remain constrained if these resources are inaccessible, inadequate, poorly maintained, or not meaningfully integrated into their everyday school experiences.

A second notable pattern is the changing relationship between importance and satisfaction. In many indicators, importance remains higher than satisfaction at both baseline and endline, indicating that children continue to value these resources more highly than their actual experiences. However, in several cases the gap narrows at endline because satisfaction improves. This suggests movement towards greater alignment between children's valued conditions and their lived experiences.

The strongest positive changes are observed in areas related to health and physical wellbeing, inclusive facilities, digital and informational resources, physical infrastructure, and child participation. In particular, the large improvement in the child club indicator is important because it reflects not only increased availability but also increased satisfaction and importance. This may indicate a strengthening of opportunities for children's participation and agency.

Conversely, the decline in satisfaction with parent–teacher meetings warrants attention. Although such meetings remain an important mechanism for school–family relationships, the endline results suggest that their perceived effectiveness or responsiveness may have weakened. This contrasts with the substantial improvement in child clubs and may indicate a broader shift towards valuing opportunities in which children themselves have a more active role.

Overall, the baseline–endline comparison suggests that the intervention context was associated with uneven but meaningful changes in the conditions that enable children's capabilities. Improvements are most visible where changes appear to have affected both the availability of resources and children's satisfaction with them. The findings therefore reinforce a central proposition of the CA: resources constitute enabling conditions, but their presence alone is insufficient to demonstrate that children are experiencing expanded capabilities. What matters is whether children perceive these resources as adequate, accessible, meaningful, and supportive of the things they value and aspire to do and be.

SECTION 5

VALUATION OF WELL-BEING AND AGENCY

5.1 Well-being and Agency

This section presents the aggregated scores for each dimension at baseline and endline, using the mean values derived from the indicators comprising children's (a) well-being freedom, (b) well-being achievement, (c) agency freedom, and (d) agency achievement. A total of 16 capability domains were assessed, with each domain rated on a **0–10 scale**. Across the Bhutanese school context, the scores range from **9.01** to **9.05**, indicating generally high levels of perceived well-being and agency at both baseline and endline. The comparison further highlights domains in which children's scores increased, remained relatively stable, or declined over the course of the intervention.

5.1.1 Well-being Freedom: Baseline-Endline Comparison

Figure 8 presents a comparison of children's assessed Well-being Freedom across the 16 capability domains at baseline and endline. From a CA perspective, Well-being Freedom refers to children's perceived opportunities and abilities to achieve valued ways of being and doing. The assessment therefore examines not only children's general well-being but also the extent to which they perceive themselves as having opportunities to make choices, pursue aspirations, maintain their identities, and access conditions that support their well-being. As shown in Figure 8, the scores ranged from 8.59 to 9.27 at baseline and from 8.53 to 9.41 at endline. At baseline, Social Relations recorded the highest score (9.27), while Mental Well-being had the lowest score (8.59). At endline, Love, Care and Respect recorded the highest score (9.41), whereas Nutritional Well-being had the lowest score (8.53).

The findings for Well-being Freedom indicate changes in children's perceived opportunities to achieve valued aspects of well-being between baseline and endline. The highest increase was observed in **Mental Well-being**, which rose from 8.59 at baseline to 9.13 at endline (+0.54 points). This was followed by **Autonomy**, which increased from 8.77 to 9.20 (+0.43), and **Aspiration**, which rose from 8.74 to 9.12 (+0.38).

The increase in Autonomy suggests that children perceived greater opportunities to make personal decisions, engage in activities they enjoy during their free time, participate in activities that support personal development, manage their time, and undertake activities without always requiring parental permission or experiencing external pressure. Similarly, the increase in Aspiration indicates that children perceived greater opportunities to dream about their futures, consider their goals, envision what they would like to become, and discuss their future plans with parents and teachers. These changes suggest a positive shift in children's perceived opportunities to exercise independence and develop their future aspirations.

The greatest decline was observed in **Nutritional Well-being**, which decreased from 8.91 to 8.53 (−0.38 points). The indicators relate to children's opportunities to access regular meals, consume

protein, vegetables and fruits, satisfy their hunger, eat snacks when hungry, request additional servings, and have lunch before school. The decline may indicate that children perceived limitations in their opportunities to access sufficient and nutritious food or respond to their dietary needs. In a school context, limited opportunities to influence meal choices may be one possible consideration, although further investigation is needed to establish the reasons for the decline.

Religion and Identity and **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum** both declined by 0.25 points. Religion and Identity decreased from 9.26 to 9.01, while GESI Curriculum fell from 9.04 to 8.79. The Religion and Identity indicators focus on opportunities to participate in religious activities, practise one's religion without discrimination, respect others' religions, practise religious virtues, celebrate religious festivals, visit places of worship, and understand religious teachings. The decline suggests a slight reduction in children's perceived opportunities to exercise these aspects of religious identity and practice. However, the scores alone do not establish whether children experienced discrimination or reduced access to religious activities.

For GESI Curriculum, the indicators assess children's perceived opportunities to receive curricular information about health care and hygiene, religious and social tolerance, gender equity and social inclusion, the equal treatment of persons with disabilities, and the equal treatment of people in need. The decline may point to opportunities to strengthen the relevance, accessibility, and inclusiveness of GESI-related learning. Given the structured nature of the school curriculum, further exploration could examine whether children have sufficient opportunities to engage with these topics, express their views, and connect curricular knowledge with their everyday experiences.

From a CA perspective**,** the findings indicate that changes in children's perceived freedoms were not uniform across all capability domains. Although improvements in Mental Well-being, Autonomy, and Aspiration suggest an expansion of opportunities in these areas, the declines in Nutritional Well-being, Religion and Identity, and GESI Curriculum highlight aspects of children's valued freedoms that may require further attention. The findings reinforce the importance of looking beyond overall scores to examine whether children have genuine opportunities to make meaningful choices, pursue their aspirations, access adequate nutrition, practise their identities freely, and engage with inclusive learning. Strengthening these opportunities requires listening to children's perspectives and addressing the contextual factors that may enable or constrain their freedoms. Further consultation with children, teachers, and parents would help clarify the reasons for the observed changes and inform future interventions. Although the baseline–endline comparison identifies changes over the intervention period, additional evidence is needed to determine the extent to which these changes can be attributed to the LIKE Club intervention.

FIGURE 8: WELL-BEING FREEDOM - BASELINE VS ENDLINE

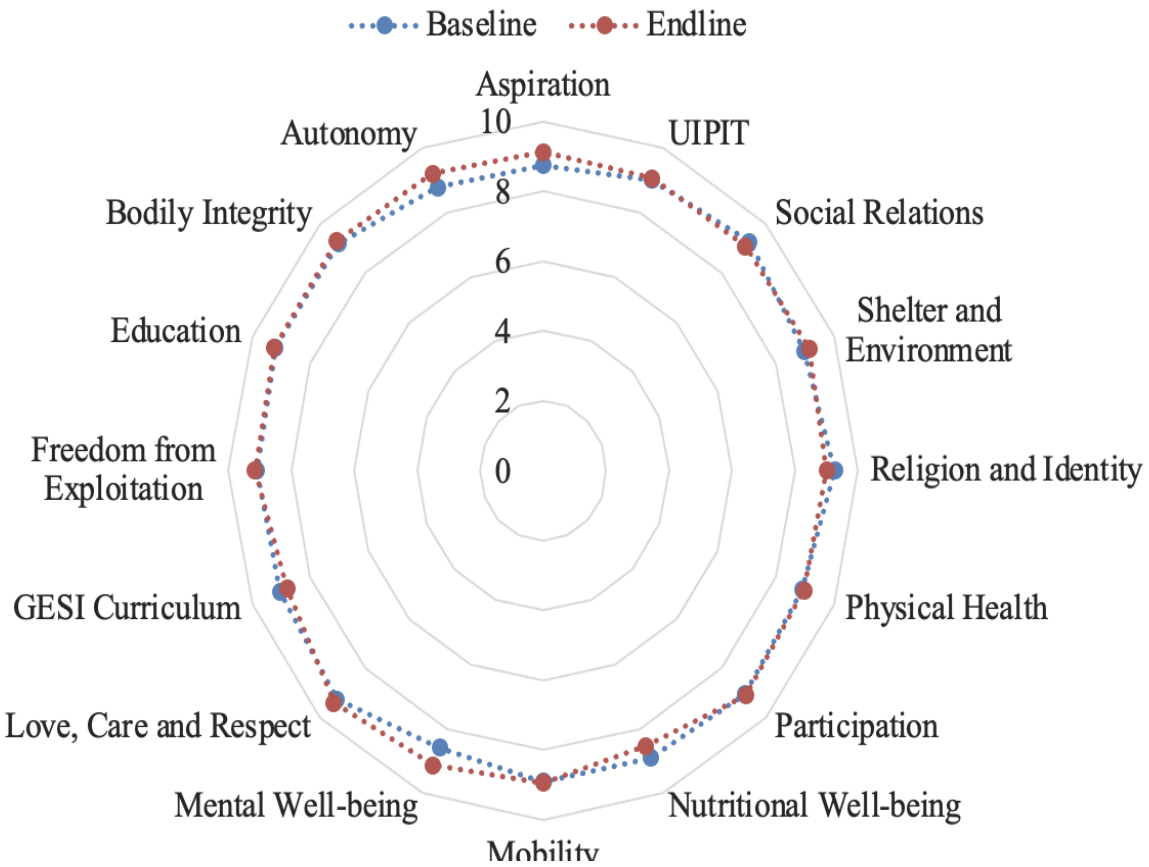

Figure 8: Well-being Freedom

5.1.2 Well-being Achievement: Baseline-Endline Comparison

Figure 9 presents a comparison of children's well-being achievement across the 16 capability domains at baseline and endline. As shown in the figure, the Well-being Achievement scores across the 16 capability domains ranged from 8.35 to 9.30 at baseline and from 8.78 to 9.28 at endline. The findings for Well-being Achievement indicate improvements in several capability domains between baseline and endline, alongside modest declines in a few areas.

The highest increase was observed in **Mobility**, which rose from 8.35 at baseline to 9.00 at endline, an increase of 0.65 points. The indicators assessed children's experiences of going to school independently, commuting safely within their villages, visiting friends when needed, and strolling around the village with friends. The improvement suggests that children reported more positive experiences of mobility and greater opportunities to move independently and safely within their communities.

Physical Health recorded the second-highest increase, rising from 8.62 to 9.02 (+0.40 points). The indicators examined children's participation in school physical activities, access to medical facilities and first aid, living in a clean school environment, and getting adequate sleep. The increase suggests

improvements in children's reported experiences of physical well-being and access to health-supporting conditions.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum also showed a notable increase, from 8.82 at baseline to 9.14 at endline (+0.32 points). The indicators assessed whether children received information through the curriculum about health care and hygiene, religious and social tolerance, gender equity and social inclusion, and the equal treatment of persons with disabilities and people in need. This improvement suggests that children reported greater achievement in accessing GESI-related knowledge through their education.

Conversely, the greatest decline was observed in **Understand, Interpret, Plan/Imagine and Think (UIPIT)**, which decreased from 9.08 to 8.88 (−0.20 points). The indicators assessed children's ability to plan for the future, engage in creative activities such as making art and writing stories, understand and interpret classroom content, and seek academic support from friends, parents, and teachers. Although the decline was relatively small, it highlights the importance of providing opportunities for creative expression, independent thinking, planning, and seeking support when facing learning difficulties.

Social Relations recorded the second-largest decline, falling from 9.24 to 9.09 (−0.15 points). The indicators examined children's experiences of living harmoniously in a cooperative community, following societal norms, making friends, receiving help and support when needed, and supporting others. Considered alongside the related **Love, Care and Respect** domain, which assessed children's love, care, and respect for and received from parents, teachers, elders, juniors, and friends, the findings highlight the importance of fostering positive relationships, mutual respect, cooperation, and a sense of belonging at school, at home, and in the wider community.

Nutritional Well-being declined slightly, from 8.87 to 8.84 (−0.03 points). The indicators assessed children's access to sufficient and nutritious food, including the number of daily meals, consumption of protein, vegetables and fruits, satisfaction of hunger, access to snacks between meals, the opportunity to request additional servings, and having lunch before school. Although the change was minimal, the findings reinforce the importance of ensuring that children have access to adequate nutrition and opportunities to meet their dietary needs.

Overall, the findings indicate positive changes in children's reported well-being achievements, particularly in mobility, physical health, and access to GESI-related learning. However, the declines in UIPIT, Social Relations, and Nutritional Well-being identify areas requiring continued attention. Schools could strengthen opportunities for creative and critical thinking, promote supportive relationships and peer cooperation, and ensure that children's nutritional needs are adequately addressed. Further consultation with children, teachers, and parents would help clarify the reasons for these changes and inform future interventions. While the findings demonstrate changes between baseline and endline, additional evidence would be needed to establish the extent to which these changes can be attributed specifically to the LIKE Club intervention.

From a CA perspective, these findings suggest that capability expansion and well-being achievement are related but distinct dimensions of children's well-being. The endline results indicate improvements in children's reported achievements in Mobility, Physical Health, and access to GESI-related learning, alongside smaller increases in several other domains. However, declines in UIPIT, Social Relations, and Nutritional Well-being highlight areas where children's realised well-being may require further support. These variations underscore the importance of considering not only the opportunities available to children but also the extent to which they can translate these opportunities into valued experiences and outcomes. Continued efforts should therefore focus on strengthening children's actual experiences of well-being while addressing the barriers that may constrain their achievements.

Figure 9: Well-being Achievement - Baseline vs Endline

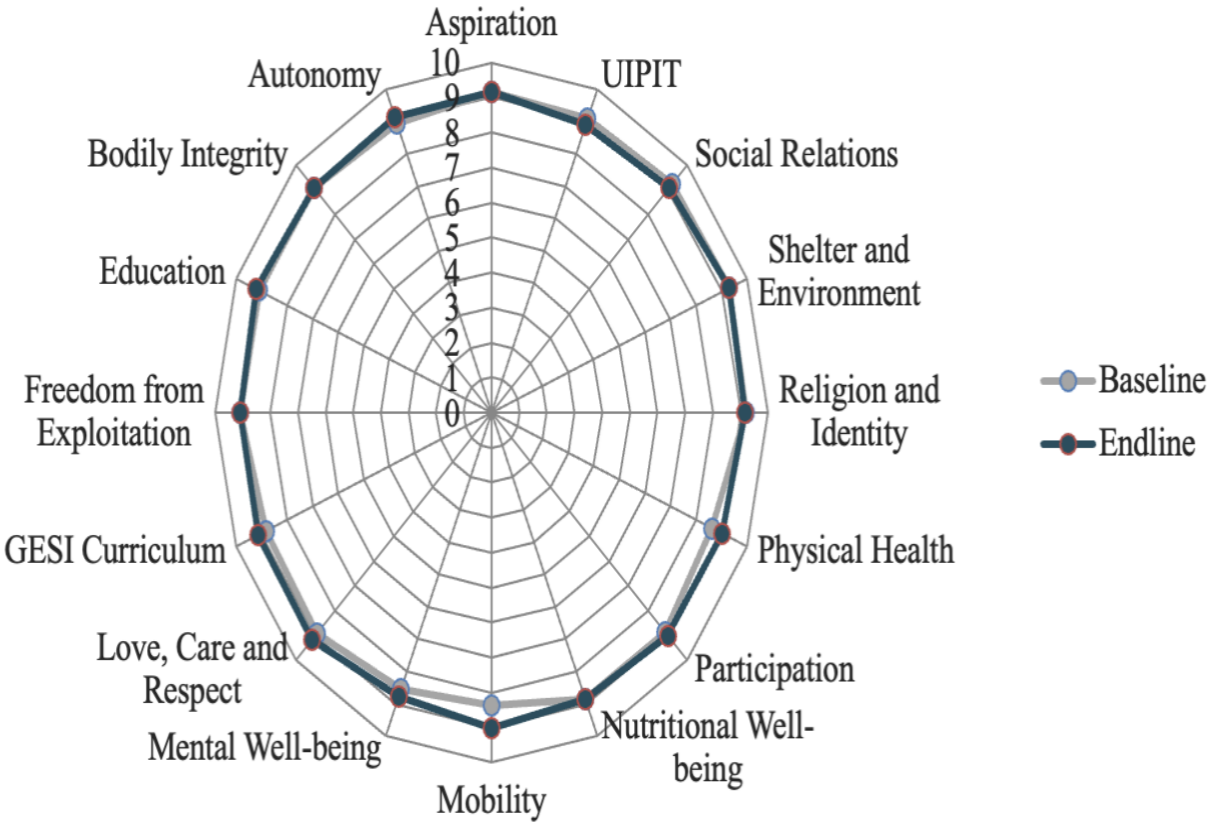

Figure 9: Well-being Achievement

5.1.3 Agency Freedom: Baseline-Endline Comparison

Figure 10 presents a comparison of children's Agency Freedom across the 16 capability domains at baseline and endline. From a CA perspective, Agency Freedom refers to children's perceived opportunities to make choices and decisions about matters they value. As shown in Table 3, the scores ranged from 8.66 to 9.31 at baseline and from 7.84 to 9.26 at endline.

The highest increase in Agency Freedom was observed in GESI Curriculum and Physical Health, both increasing by 0.22 points. GESI Curriculum rose from 8.89 to 9.11, suggesting that children perceived greater opportunities to access curricular information about health care and hygiene, religious and social tolerance, gender equity and social inclusion, and the equal treatment of persons with disabilities and people in need. Physical Health increased from 8.90 to 9.12, indicating improved perceived opportunities to participate in school physical activities, access medical facilities and first aid, live in a clean school environment, and obtain adequate sleep.

The greatest decline was observed in Mental Well-being, which decreased from 8.66 to 7.84 (−0.82 points). The indicators relate to feeling happy at school, experiencing fear, deciding when and with whom to share feelings, and finding ways to remain positive when facing school-related difficulties. This substantial decline warrants further investigation into children's emotional experiences at school and the support available to them. Religion and Identity also declined, from 9.30 to 9.00 (−0.30 points), suggesting a reduction in children's perceived opportunities to participate in religious activities at school, practise their religion without discrimination, respect other religions, practise religious virtues, celebrate festivals, visit places of worship, and understand religious teachings. Nutritional Well-being fell from 8.94 to 8.66 (−0.28 points), indicating a possible reduction in children's perceived opportunities to make choices related to food and meet their dietary needs.

From a CA perspective, these findings suggest that children's perceived opportunities to exercise agency changed across the capability domains during the LIKE Club intervention. The increases in GESI Curriculum and Physical Health indicate positive changes in children's perceived opportunities to access GESI-related learning and make choices that support their physical well-being. However, the substantial decline in Mental Well-being, alongside decreases in Religion and Identity and Nutritional Well-being, highlights areas requiring further attention. These findings suggest that future LIKE Club activities could place greater emphasis on supporting children's emotional well-being, strengthening their opportunities to express their feelings and participate in decisions, and promoting inclusive environments in which children can exercise their choices freely. Further consultation with children and teachers would help clarify the reasons for the observed changes and inform the planning of subsequent activities. Although these changes occurred during the intervention period, the baseline–endline comparison alone does not establish that they were caused by the LIKE Club intervention.

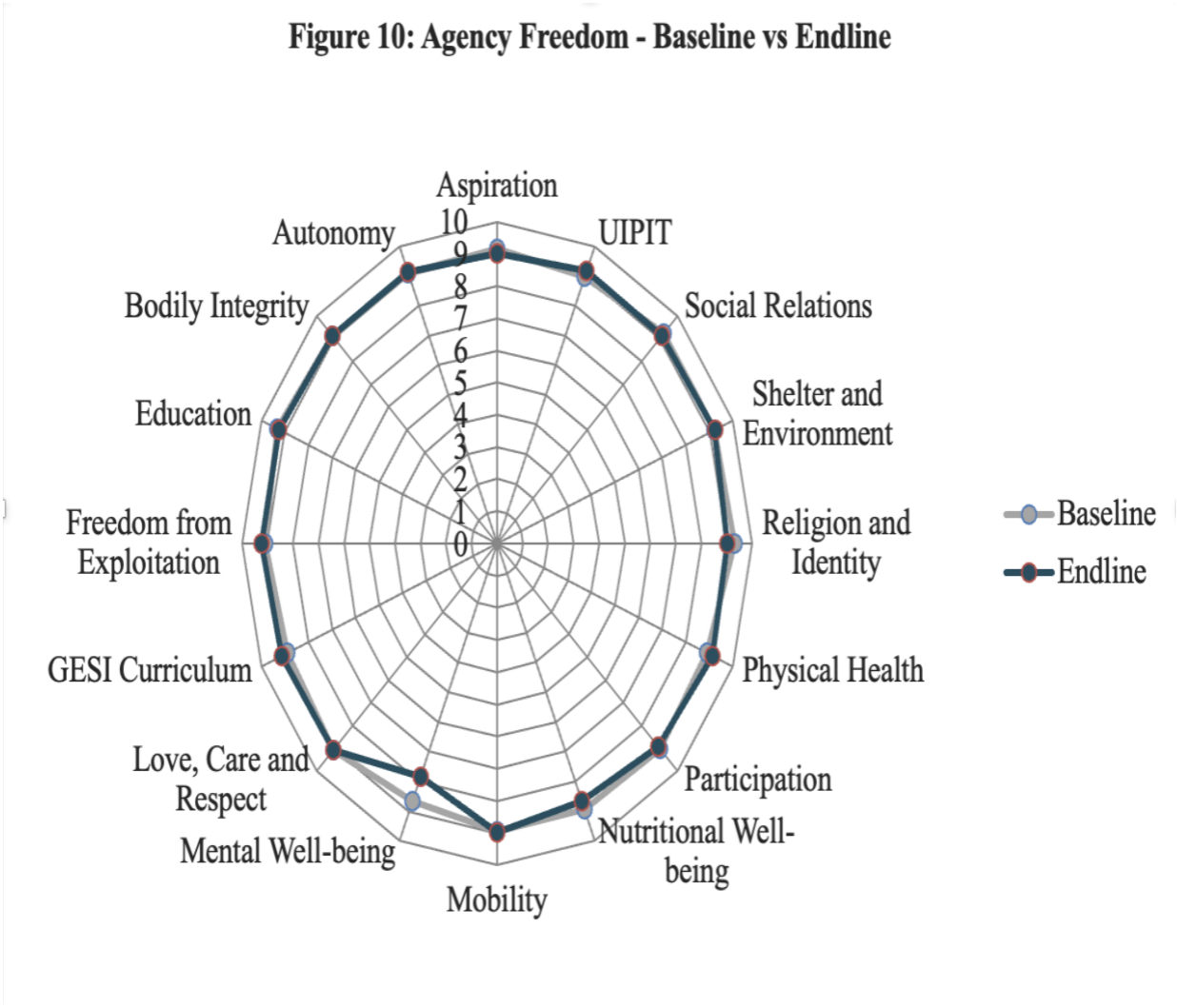

Figure 10: Agency Freedom

5.1.4 Agency Achievement: Baseline and Endline Comparison

Figure 11 presents a comparison of children's Agency Achievement across the 16 capability domains at baseline and endline. From a CA perspective, Agency Achievement refers to the choices children have actually made and the extent to which they have exercised their agency in practice. As shown in Table 4, the scores across the capability domains ranged from 8.68 to 9.33 at baseline and from 8.83 to 9.25 at endline.

The highest increase was observed in Mental Well-being, which rose from 8.68 at baseline to 9.03 at endline (+0.35 points). The indicators assessed children's experiences of feeling happy at school, feeling scared or afraid, deciding when and with whom to share their feelings, and finding ways to remain positive when facing difficulties at school. The increase suggests an improvement in children's reported experiences of mental well-being and agency, although further investigation is needed to understand which aspects contributed to the change.

Bodily Integrity recorded the second-highest increase, rising from 8.96 to 9.14 (+0.18 points). The indicators examined children's experiences of feeling safe at home, in their communities and at school; awareness of physical violence, bullying and inappropriate touching; knowledge of their rights and legal protection; and freedom from bullying, violence and abuse, including on social media. The increase suggests more positive reported experiences of safety and protection at endline.

Freedom from Economic/Non-Economic Exploitation also increased, from 9.08 to 9.25 (+0.17 points). The indicators assessed whether children had received information about their legal rights to protect themselves from exploitation, attended school regularly without being required to miss classes for work or household chores, and had more time to study than to undertake household work. This improvement suggests positive changes in children's reported experiences of protection from exploitation and their ability to prioritise education.

The greatest decline was observed in Autonomy, which decreased from 9.08 at baseline to 8.83 at endline (−0.25 points). The indicators focused on children's actual choices concerning personal matters, leisure activities, personal development, time management, independence from constant parental permission, and participation in hobbies without external pressure. The decline suggests that children reported fewer opportunities or experiences of exercising independence in these areas, highlighting the need to explore how children can be supported to make and act on age-appropriate personal choices.

Religion and Identity recorded the next-largest decline, falling from 9.33 to 9.09 (−0.24 points). Participation decreased from 9.15 to 8.96 (−0.19 points). The Participation indicators assessed children's actual involvement in conversations with friends outside the classroom, extracurricular activities, sports, raising their hands, questioning teachers, and answering questions in class. The decline suggests that children may have experienced fewer opportunities to participate actively in school and classroom activities at the endline. This highlights the importance of creating inclusive

environments where children feel encouraged to express their views, ask questions, and engage in activities without hesitation.

From a CA perspective, the findings suggest that children's actual exercise of agency improved in some domains but declined in others during the LIKE Club intervention. Improvements in Mental Well-being, Bodily Integrity, and Freedom from Exploitation are encouraging, while declines in Autonomy and Participation highlight areas for further attention. Future LIKE Club activities could strengthen children's confidence to express themselves, participate in school decisions and activities, make age-appropriate choices, and understand their rights and protections. Further consultation with children and teachers would help clarify the reasons for these changes. Although the differences occurred between baseline and endline, the findings alone do not establish that the LIKE Club intervention caused them.

Figure 11: Agency Achievement - Baseline vs Endline

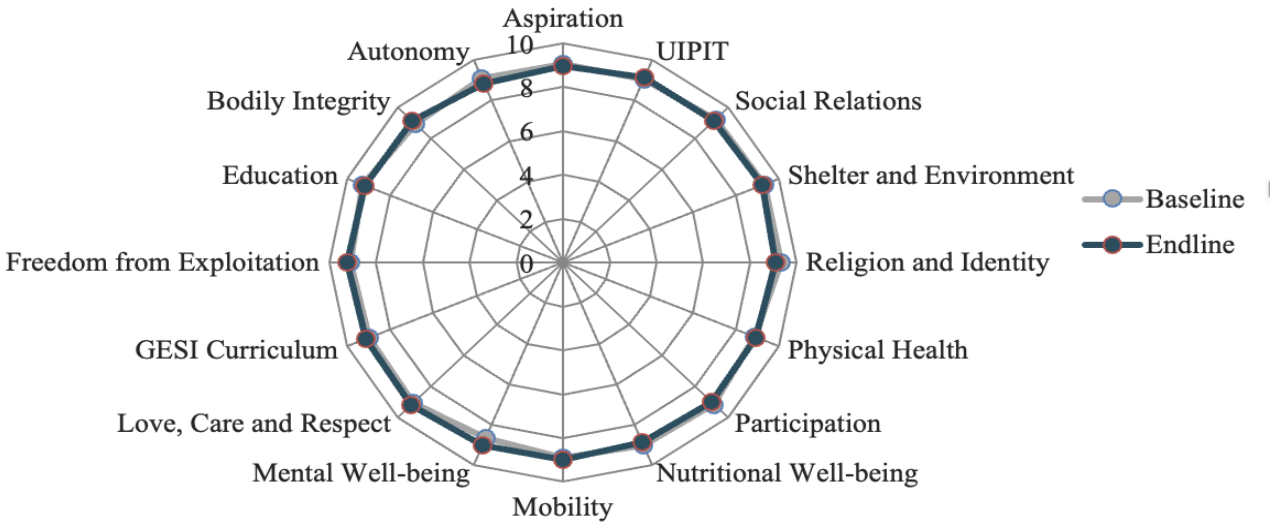

Figure 11: Agency Achievement

5.2 Gender

5.2.1 Well-being Freedom by Gender

As shown in Table 5, the baseline and endline findings suggest generally high levels of well-being and freedom among male and female respondents, with positive changes observed across several capability domains. Improvements were particularly evident in autonomy among females **(8.75** to **9.24)**, love, care and respect among females **(9.30** to **9.47)**, mental well-being among females **(8.47** to **9.21)**, and aspiration among males **(8.45** to **9.14)**. These positive changes may suggest that the LIKE Club intervention was effective in creating opportunities for children to participate, express themselves, build relationships, and develop greater confidence and autonomy. Positive changes were also observed in the learning and living environment, such as shelter and environment among males **(8.84** to **9.06)** and females (9.10 to 9.22), indicating improvements in children's perceptions of their overall environment.

However, some domains showed slight declines among particular gender groups. For example, nutritional well-being among males declined from **8.86** to **8.24**. This may be partly explained by the fact that children do not have the freedom to choose what they would like to eat, as the school menu is predetermined and fixed. Similarly, scores for the GESI curriculum declined slightly among males **(9.07** to **8.73)** and females **(9.07** to **8.85)**. This could be related to the structured nature of the school curriculum, where children have limited opportunities to decide what they would like to learn because the syllabus and learning content are predetermined. A slight decline was also observed in mobility among males **(9.04** to **8.92)** and religion and identity among males **(9.20** to **8.99)**, suggesting that some aspects of children's freedom may remain influenced by factors beyond the scope of the intervention.

Overall, the findings indicate that well-being and freedom remained at relatively high levels from baseline to endline. The improvements across several domains suggest that the LIKE Club intervention contributed positively to children's well-being, participation, autonomy, relationships, and aspirations, while the areas showing lower scores highlight structural aspects of children's lives where their choices remain limited, particularly in relation to food choices and curriculum content.

Table 5: Well-being Freedom by Gender

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***
Aspiration	*8.45*	9.04	9.00	9.14	9.09	10.00
Autonomy	8.80	8.75	7.67	9.16	9.24	9.00
Bodily Integrity	9.17	9.22	9.13	9.24	9.34	8.75
Education	9.17	9.24	8.79	9.26	9.20	9.5
Freedom from Exploitation	9.16	9.01	8.67	9.16	9.17	6.33
GESI Curriculum	9.07	9.07	6.00	8.73	8.85	8.40
Love, Care and Respect	9.22	9.30	7.83	9.34	9.47	9.73
Mental Well-being	8.71	8.47	9.00	9.05	9.21	8.50
Mobility	9.04	8.79	9.00	8.92	8.97	8.50
Nutritional Well-being	8.86	8.96	8.86	8.24	8.82	10.00
Participation	9.06	9.06	7.33	9.10	9.10	7.67
Physical Health	8.78	9.04	9.00	8.98	8.98	8.75
Shelter and Environment	8.84	9.10	8.60	9.06	9.22	9.00
Social Relations	9.31	9.20	8.20	9.04	9.13	8.50
UIPIT	8.96	9.31	8.86	9.01	9.01	9.09
Religion and Identity	9.20	9.10	8.60	8.99	9.03	9.29

5.2.2 Well-being Achievement by Gender

As shown in Table 6, the baseline and endline findings suggest generally high levels of well-being and achievement among male and female respondents, with positive changes observed across several domains. The most notable improvement was observed in female respondents' mental well-being, which increased from 8.47 at baseline to 9.21 at endline**,** representing an increase of 0.74 points. Improvements were also observed in male respondents' aspiration **(8.45** to **9.14)** and female respondents' autonomy **(8.75** to **9.24)**. These positive changes may suggest that the LIKE Club intervention was effective in creating opportunities for children to express themselves, participate actively, develop confidence, and strengthen their sense of autonomy and aspiration. The improvement in mental well-being may also reflect the supportive and interactive environment created through the LIKE Club activities.

However, some domains showed declines among particular gender groups. The largest decline was observed in male respondents' nutritional well-being, which decreased from **8.86** at baseline to **8.24** at endline. This may be partly explained by the fact that children have limited freedom to choose what they would like to eat, as the school menu is predetermined and fixed. Therefore, although the LIKE Club may provide opportunities for children to express their views, their choices regarding food remain constrained by the existing school arrangements.

Overall, the findings indicate that well-being and achievement remained at relatively high levels among both male and female respondents from baseline to endline. The improvements, particularly in mental well-being, aspiration, and autonomy, suggest that the LIKE Club intervention contributed positively to children's personal development, confidence, and sense of agency. At the same time, the decline in nutritional well-being highlights an area where children's choices remain limited by structural factors beyond the direct influence of the intervention.

Table 6: Well-being Achievement by Gender

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***
Aspiration	*9.01*	9.28	8.75	9.12	9.18	10.00
Autonomy	8.69	8.56	6.00	9.09	8.95	9.50
Bodily Integrity	9.06	9.09	8.25	9.11	9.07	8.00
Education	9.12	9.08	8.21	9.28	9.14	9.43
Freedom from Exploitation	9.17	8.99	9.00	9.05	9.12	9.00
GESI Curriculum	8.95	8.69	5.20	9.07	9.19	10.00
Love, Care and Respect	8.92	8.95	8.75	9.07	9.27	9.23
Mental Well-being	8.63	8.44	7.50	8.71	8.84	9.25
Mobility	8.18	8.50	8.50	8.92	9.09	7.50
Nutritional Well-being	8.84	8.91	9.29	8.63	9.05	10.00
Participation	8.88	8.57	6.50	9.00	9.01	8.17
Physical Health	8.69	8.56	6.00	9.09	8.95	9.50
Shelter and Environment	9.37	9.22	8.60	9.27	9.29	9.40
Social Relations	9.28	9.21	8.00	9.08	9.10	8.40
UIPIT	9.01	9.16	8.14	8.92	8.84	8.43
Religion and Identity	9.15	9.23	9.29	9.10	9.22	9.57

5.2.3 Agency Freedom

Table 7 presents the baseline and endline findings for agency freedom by gender**.** The findings suggest generally high levels of agency freedom among male and female respondents, with positive changes observed across several capability domains. The most notable improvement was observed in GESI Curriculum among females, which increased from **8.88** to **9.17**, an increase of **0.29 points**. This suggests that female children perceived greater freedom to access information through the curriculum on health and hygiene, religious and social tolerance, gender equity and social inclusion, equal treatment of persons with disabilities, and equal treatment of people in need**.**

An improvement was also observed in Physical Health among males, which increased from **8.86** to **9.12 (+0.26)**. This may indicate that male children perceived greater freedom to participate in physical activities, access medical facilities and first aid at school, live in a clean school environment, and maintain healthy sleeping practices**.** Similarly, UIPIT among males increased from **8.92** to **9.18 (+0.26)**, suggesting greater freedom to plan for the future, imagine and think creatively, understand and interpret classroom content, and seek support from friends, parents, and teachers when experiencing difficulties in learning**.**

Among females, Mobility increased from 8.91 to **9.12 (+0.21)**. This improvement suggests that female children perceived greater freedom to go to school independently, commute safely within the village, visit friends when needed, and move around the village with friends**.** These positive changes may suggest that the LIKE Club intervention was effective in creating opportunities for children to exercise choice, express their preferences, participate in activities, seek support, and make decisions within areas that were within their influence**.**

However, some domains showed declines. The largest decline was observed in Mental Well-being among males, which decreased from **8.67** at baseline to **7.58** at endline, representing a decline of **1.09** points**.** Since agency freedom reflects **"I choose to…"**, this decline may indicate that male children perceived less freedom to make choices related to their emotional well-being. The indicators focused on whether children felt happy when coming to school, felt scared or afraid at school, could decide when and with whom to share their feelings, and could find ways to remain positive when facing difficulties at school. The decline may therefore suggest reduced perceived freedom to manage and express emotions, choose whom to confide in, and identify ways of coping with challenges. Female respondents also showed a decline in mental well-being, from **8.66** to **8.10**, although the decline was smaller.

Other decreases were observed in Religion and Identity among females **(9.44** to **9.10)** and Nutritional Well-being among males **(8.86** to **8.48)**. These changes may reflect areas where children's choices are influenced by factors beyond the direct scope of the LIKE Club intervention. For instance, children have limited choice regarding what they eat because the school menu is predetermined and fixed**.** Similarly, although children may express their interests and views through the LIKE Club, they have limited freedom to determine what they learn because the school syllabus and curriculum content are structured and predetermined**.**

Overall, the findings indicate that agency freedom remained relatively high among both male and female respondents**.** Improvements in GESI Curriculum, Physical Health, UIPIT, and Mobility suggest that children experienced greater opportunities to exercise choice in relation to learning, health, movement, participation, and seeking support. At the same time, the decline in **Mental Well-being**, particularly among males, highlights the need for continued attention to children's emotional safety and freedom to express and manage their feelings. The findings also indicate that children's agency remains shaped by broader school structures, particularly in areas such as food choices and curriculum content**,** where children's individual choices are necessarily limited.

Table 7: Agency Freedom by Gender

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***
Aspiration	9.08	9.27	8.50	9.01	9.05	10.00
Autonomy	9.07	9.11	7.83	9.10	9.18	7.17
Bodily Integrity	9.14	9.14	8.25	9.04	9.20	7.50
Education	9.29	9.33	8.29	9.31	9.21	9.79
Freedom from Exploitation	9.28	8.86	8.33	9.20	9.26	9.00
GESI Curriculum	8.89	8.88	8.60	9.05	9.17	9.80
Love, Care and Respect	9.04	9.12	8.00	8.96	9.16	7.73
Mental Well-being	8.67	8.66	7.25	7.58	8.10	9.00
Mobility	8.96	8.91	8.75	8.87	9.12	7.50
Nutritional Well-being	8.86	9.01	8.14	8.48	8.83	10.00
Participation	8.97	9.11	6.83	8.88	8.98	7.83
Physical Health	8.86	8.94	7.50	9.12	9.14	7.75
Shelter and Environment	9.18	9.23	8.50	9.17	9.30	8.20
Social Relations	9.25	9.25	8.00	9.10	9.15	7.40
UIPIT	8.92	9.05	8.00	9.18	9.14	9.00
Religion and Identity	9.16	9.44	8.86	8.90	9.10	9.14

***5.2.4 Agency** Achievement*

As presented in Table 8, the findings suggest generally high levels of agency achievement**,** indicating that children have actually exercised choices and made decisions in different areas. The largest improvement was observed in male mental well-being, from 8.56 **to** 9.04 (+0.48). This suggests that male children reported greater achievement in exercising choices or taking actions that contribute to their well-being at endline. Improvements were also observed in male bodily integrity (8.99 **to** 9.08) and female love, care and respect (9.11 **to** 9.29).

The largest decline was observed in male Religion and Identity, from 9.27 at baseline to 8.96 at endline (-0.31). Since agency achievement reflects **"I have chosen to…"**, this decline may indicate a slight reduction in the extent to which male children actually exercised their choices through religious participation and practices**.** This includes participating in religious activities at school, practising their religion freely without feeling discriminated against, respecting the religions of friends and teachers, practising religious virtues in daily life, celebrating religious festivals, visiting places of worship, and understanding the teachings of goodness in their religion. The decline does not necessarily indicate reduced religious freedom; rather, it suggests that children reported slightly lower levels of actually engaging in or exercising these choices at endline**.**

Table 8: Agency Achievement by Gender

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***	***Male***	***Female***	***Other***
Aspiration	*8.93*	9.16	8.75	8.91	9.04	9.75
Autonomy	9.01	9.15	8.00	8.83	8.87	5.67
Bodily Integrity	8.99	8.93	8.88	9.08	9.21	8.12
Education	9.27	9.35	8.36	9.19	9.21	9.21
Freedom from Exploitation	9.17	8.99	9.00	9.23	9.27	9.33
GESI Curriculum	8.95	9.03	8.60	9.11	9.15	8.40
Love, Care and Respect	8.99	9.11	8.40	9.10	9.29	5.35
Mental Well-being	8.56	8.80	8.00	9.04	9.02	9.25
Mobility	8.95	8.84	9.00	8.90	9.10	3.75
Nutritional Well-being	8.95	9.07	8.29	8.88	8.79	10.00
Participation	9.12	9.18	7.00	8.87	9.04	9.50
Physical Health	8.72	9.00	7.75	9.04	8.88	6.00
Shelter and Environment	9.33	9.29	8.60	9.15	9.27	9.14
Social Relations	9.24	9.24	8.20	9.10	9.22	8.40
UIPIT	9.07	9.39	9.14	8.96	9.22	9.43
Religion and Identity	9.27	9.39	9.14	8.96	9.22	9.43

5.3 Grade

5.3.1 Well-being Freedom

Table 9 presents the baseline and endline findings on **well-being freedom by grade**. Overall, the findings indicate generally high levels of well-being freedom across all three grade groups, with several capability domains showing improvement at endline.

At the Primary School level, improvements were observed in several domains, particularly Aspiration **(8.84 to 9.30),** Autonomy **(8.82 to 9.37),** Bodily Integrity **(9.30 to 9.53),** Freedom from Exploitation **(9.17 to 9.39),** Love, Care and Respect **(9.35 to 9.48),** Mental Well-being **(8.68 to 9.27),** Nutritional Well-being **(9.02 to 9.25),** Participation **(9.09 to 9.20),** Shelter and Environment **(9.03 to 9.46),** and UIPIT **(9.20 to 9.34)**. These changes suggest increased perceptions of well-being freedom among primary school children across several capability areas.

For Lower Secondary School students, the pattern was more mixed. Improvements were observed in Education **(9.23 to 9.26)** and Shelter and Environment **(8.98 to 9.02),** while the scores for Freedom from Exploitation **(9.13 to 9.04),** Social Relations **(9.25 to 9.04**), and Religion and Identity **(9.24 to 9.06) declined**. Therefore, the LSS findings should be interpreted carefully, as some domains remained stable while others decreased slightly. Notably, Bodily Integrity, GESI Curriculum, Love, Care and Respect, and Mobility showed relatively stable or unchanged scores.

Among Middle Secondary School students, several domains showed improvement, including Aspiration **(8.43** to **9.25),** Autonomy **(8.43** to **9.18),** Love, Care and Respect **(9.11** to **9.32),** Mental Well-being **(8.41** to **9.05),** and UIPIT **(8.54** to **9.12)**. However, declines were observed in GESI Curriculum **(9.44** to **8.28),** Mobility **(9.33** to **8.71),** Nutritional Well-being **(8.71** to **8.27),** Participation **(8.98** to **8.87),** Physical Health **(8.66** to **8.62),** and Religion and Identity **(9.06** to **8.57)**.

Overall, the findings suggest that well-being freedom remained relatively high across all grade **levels**, although the magnitude and direction of change varied by capability domain and grade. The most notable positive changes were observed in aspiration, autonomy, and mental well-being**,** particularly among primary and middle secondary students. At the same time, the declines in areas such as GESI Curriculum, nutritional well-being, mobility, and religion and identity among MSS students indicate areas that may require further attention and exploration.

Table 9: Well-being Freedom by Grade

	Baseline			*Endline*		
Capability Domain	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***
Aspiration	*8.84*	8.79	8.43	9.30	8.43	9.25
Autonomy	8.82	8.97	8.43	9.37	8.43	9.18
Bodily Integrity	9.30	9.14	8.93	9.53	9.31	9.31
Education	9.29	9.23	8.90	9.27	9.26	9.26
Freedom from Exploitation	9.17	9.13	8.79	9.39	9.04	9.09
GESI Curriculum	8.88	9.05	9.44	9.09	9.44	8.28
Love, Care and Respect	9.35	9.08	9.11	9.48	9.11	9.32
Mental Well-being	8.68	8.52	8.41	9.27	8.41	9.05
Mobility	8.69	9.19	9.33	9.11	9.33	8.71
Nutritional Well-being	9.02	8.80	8.71	9.25	8.71	8.27
Participation	9.09	8.98	8.98	9.20	8.87	8.87
Physical Health	8.97	8.91	8.66	8.99	8.66	8.62
Shelter and Environment	9.03	8.98	8.80	9.46	9.02	9.02
Social Relations	9.44	9.25	8.73	9.28	9.04	9.04
UIPIT	9.20	8.85	8.54	9.34	8.54	9.12
Religion and Identity	9.33	9.24	9.06	9.39	9.06	8.57

5.3.2 Well-being Achievement

Table 10 presents the baseline and endline findings for well-being achievement by grade. The findings indicate generally high levels of well-being achievement across PS, LSS, and MSS students, with improvements observed in several capability domains. The largest improvement was observed in Aspiration among MSS students, which increased from 8.26 at baseline to 9.29 at endline, an increase of **1.03** points. This suggests that MSS students reported stronger actual experiences and achievements related to their aspirations, including having dreams about their future, thinking about their future goals, envisioning what they would like to become, and talking about their future plans with parents and teachers. The improvement may suggest that the LIKE Club intervention was effective in helping children develop and strengthen their aspirations and future-oriented thinking.

A substantial improvement was also observed in Mobility among PS students, which increased from **8.22** to **9.13 (+0.91)**. This indicates that PS students reported greater achievement in being able to go to school independently, commute safely within the village, visit friends when needed, and move around the village with friends**.** Improvements were also observed in Bodily Integrity among MSS students **(8.52 to 9.36)** and GESI Curriculum among LSS students **(8.82 to 9.44)**. These changes suggest positive improvements in children's actual experiences of safety, protection, and access to information related to health, social tolerance, gender equality, social inclusion, and equal treatment**.**

However, some domains showed declines. The largest decline was observed in UIPIT among LSS students, which decreased from **8.98** at baseline to **8.54** at endline, a decrease of **0.44** points. Since well-being achievement reflects **"I have…"**, this decline suggests that LSS students reported slightly lower actual achievement in areas related to planning for the future, imagining and thinking creatively, understanding and interpreting classroom content, and seeking help from friends, parents, and teachers when they did not understand their schoolwork**.** This may indicate an area requiring greater attention to support students' development of planning, creative thinking, understanding, and help-seeking skills.

Other declines were relatively small, including Social Relations among LSS students **(9.33 to 8.98)** and Religion and Identity among MSS students **(9.10 to 8.79)**. The decline in Religion and Identity may relate to children's actual experiences of participating in religious activities, practising their religion freely, respecting the religions of others, practising religious virtues, celebrating festivals, visiting places of worship, and understanding teachings of goodness**.**

Overall, the findings indicate that well-being achievement remained high across all three grade groups**,** with particularly strong improvements in aspiration, mobility, bodily integrity, and GESI curriculum**.** The increase in aspiration among MSS students suggests that children reported stronger actual experiences of developing and expressing their future goals, which may reflect the contribution of the LIKE Club intervention. At the same time, the decline in UIPIT among LSS students highlights the need for continued support in planning, creative thinking, understanding, interpretation, and seeking academic support**.**

Table 10: Well-being Achievement by Grade

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***
Aspiration	*9.24*	8.31	8.26	9.36	9.29	9.29
Autonomy	8.99	9.00	8.74	9.28	9.06	9.06
Bodily Integrity	9.29	8.98	8.52	9.31	9.36	9.36
Education	9.23	9.03	8.76	9.28	9.17	9.17
Freedom from Exploitation	9.26	9.26	9.24	9.31	9.21	9.17
GESI Curriculum	8.66	8.82	9.21	9.16	9.44	9.01
Love, Care and Respect	9.04	8.76	8.77	9.23	9.00	9.00
Mental Well-being	8.61	8.56	8.24	8.93	8.54	8.51
Mobility	8.22	8.59	8.48	9.13	9.13	8.96
Nutritional Well-being	8.95	8.78	8.76	9.32	8.80	8.65
Participation	8.94	8.73	8.77	9.12	9.13	8.72
Physical Health	8.83	8.31	8.26	9.33	8.80	8.49
Shelter and Environment	9.32	9.12	9.18	9.54	9.31	9.33
Social Relations	9.39	9.33	8.62	9.38	8.98	8.98
UIPIT	9.25	8.98	8.67	9.28	8.54	8.64
Religion and Identity	9.24	8.98	9.10	9.46	8.79	8.79

5.3.3 Agency Freedom

Table 11 presents the baseline and endline findings for agency freedom by grade, focusing on the extent to which children perceive that they can make choices and exercise agency in different areas of their lives. Since agency freedom refers to **"I choose to…"**, increases in scores indicate greater perceived freedom to make decisions, express preferences, and exercise choices.

The findings show mixed changes across the three grade groups**.** Several domains improved, particularly GESI Curriculum, Freedom from Exploitation, Physical Health, Autonomy, and UIPIT**,** while declines were observed in areas such as Mental Well-being, Religion and Identity, Participation, and Nutritional Well-being**.**

The most notable improvement was observed in GESI Curriculum among PS childre**n**, whose score increased from **8.65** to **9.18**, an increase of **0.53 points**. LSS also showed a substantial increase from **9.04** to **9.44 (+0.40)**. This improvement may indicate that children had greater opportunities to choose to engage with or apply knowledge related to healthcare and hygiene, religious and social tolerance, gender equity and social inclusion, and the equal treatment of persons with disabilities and people in need**.** The improvement may also reflect the contribution of LIKE Club activities in creating opportunities for children to discuss and express their views on GESI-related issues. However, because the formal school curriculum remains structured, children may have limited control over what curriculum content is formally taught.

Freedom from Exploitation also showed improvement, particularly among PS children, whose score increased from **8.99** to **9.38 (+0.39)**. This may suggest greater freedom to make choices concerning their participation in schooling rather than being required to undertake excessive work or household responsibilities. The domain relates to children's awareness of their rights, regular school attendance without missing school for work or chores, and having adequate time for study. The improvement may indicate that children experienced greater opportunities to prioritize schooling and learning.

In **Autonomy**, PS children showed an increase from **9.07** to **9.26 (+0.19)**, while LSS and MSS showed smaller increases of **0.04** and **0.01**, respectively. These changes suggest some improvement in children's ability to make choices about what they wear, how they spend their free time, personal development activities, hobbies, and the use of their time. The relatively small changes among LSS and MSS may indicate that older children already had relatively high levels of autonomy at baseline.

Physical Health also improved across all three grades. PS increased from **8.97** to **9.32 (+0.35)**, LSS from **8.74** to **8.80 (+0.06)**, and MSS from **8.80** to **8.92 (+0.12)**. This may suggest greater opportunities for children to make choices related to participation in physical activities, maintaining healthy practices, and seeking appropriate health support. The stronger improvement among PS children may indicate that younger children benefited from opportunities to participate in physical and health-related activities provided through the intervention.

A notable improvement was also observed in **UIPIT** among PS and MSS children. PS increased from **9.13** to **9.55 (+0.42)**, while MSS increased from **8.54** to **8.97 (+0.43)**. These findings may indicate increased freedom to engage in planning for the future, imagining creative activities such as art, crafts, poems and stories, interpreting information, and deciding to seek clarification or assistance from friends, parents, or teachers when confused**.** Such changes may reflect increased confidence in expressing ideas and seeking support.

Bodily Integrity showed a substantial increase among MSS children, from **8.80** to **9.35 (+0.55)**, and a smaller increase among PS children, from **9.24** to **9.35 (+0.11)**. The decline among LSS children, from

9.15 to **8.80 (-0.35)**, suggests variation across grade groups. The improvement among MSS may indicate greater freedom to make choices related to personal safety, recognize inappropriate behaviour, understand their rights, and respond to experiences of bullying, violence, or unsafe situations. The decline among LSS warrants further attention because the domain includes important aspects of children's ability to recognize and respond to situations affecting their safety and bodily integrity.

Aspiration showed a decline among PS and LSS children, with scores decreasing from **9.27** to **9.07 (-0.20)** and **9.33** to **9.16 (-0.17)**, respectively. In contrast, MSS increased slightly from **9.08** to **9.16 (+0.08)**. Since this domain concerns children's ability to think about their future, develop goals, envision themselves in the future, and discuss future plans with parents and teachers, the results suggest that older MSS children experienced a slight improvement in their freedom to engage in future-oriented decision-making, while the decline among PS and LSS may require additional opportunities for children to articulate and pursue their aspirations.

The largest decline was observed in Mental Well-being among MSS children, which decreased from **8.54** to **7.43**, a reduction of **1.11** points. Declines were also observed among PS (**-0.42**) and LSS (**-0.36**). Because agency freedom in this domain relates to children's ability to decide when and with whom to share their feelings, find ways to remain positive when facing difficulties, and exercise choices concerning their emotional well-being**,** the decline may indicate reduced perceived freedom to express emotions, seek emotional support, or manage difficult situations. This is an area that may require greater attention within LIKE Club activities, particularly through safe spaces for children to express feelings, communicate concerns, and identify appropriate sources of support.

Religion and Identity also declined among LSS and MSS children. LSS decreased from **9.28** to **8.79 (-0.49)**, while MSS decreased from **9.20** to **8.79 (-0.41)**. PS, however, increased slightly from **9.34** to **9.46 (+0.12)**. The domain includes children's ability to make choices concerning participation in religious activities, practice their religion, respect other religions, practise religious values, celebrate festivals, visit places of worship, and understand teachings related to goodness. The decline among LSS and MSS may therefore indicate a reduction in the extent to which children perceived that they could exercise choices or express preferences in these areas.

Participation showed no change among PS children (**9.01** to **9.01**), a small improvement among LSS children (**9.00** to **9.13, +0.13**), and a relatively larger decline among MSS children (**9.13** to **8.61, -0.52**). Since participation includes opportunities to engage in conversations, extracurricular activities and sports, raise questions, and answer teachers' questions, the decline among MSS may indicate that older children perceived fewer opportunities to actively participate or express their views in school-related activities at endline.

Similarly, **Mobility** improved among PS children from **8.79** to **9.17 (+0.38)** but declined among LSS and MSS children by **0.05** and **0.31**, respectively. The domain relates to children's ability to move independently, including going to school, commuting safely within the village, visiting friends, and

moving around the community with peers. The improvement among PS may suggest increased confidence or opportunity for independent movement, while the decline among the older groups may reflect contextual or age-related differences in children's opportunities to move independently.

Nutritional Well-being declined slightly across all three groups: PS from **9.00** to **8.90 (-0.10)**, LSS from **8.86** to **8.80 (-0.06)**, and MSS from **8.80** to **8.64 (-0.16)**. Since this domain concerns children's choices and experiences relating to meals, food variety, snacks, additional servings, and satisfying hunger, the decline may partly reflect the fact that school meals are generally provided through a **fixed school menu**, limiting children's ability to choose the type and variety of food available to them.

The findings for **Social Relations** were relatively stable for PS and MSS, with PS declining slightly from **9.31** to **9.28 (-0.03)** and MSS increasing from **8.96** to **8.99 (+0.03)**. LSS, however, declined from **9.34** to **8.99 (-0.35)**. Since this domain includes making friends, following social norms, cooperating with others, and deciding to seek or provide help and support, the decline among LSS children may suggest reduced perceived opportunities to exercise choices in peer relationships and social interactions.

Love, Care and Respect showed a small improvement among PS children, increasing from **9.18** to **9.25 (+0.07)**, while LSS and MSS declined slightly. These findings relate to children's choices and actions concerning showing love, care, and respect towards parents, teachers, elders, younger children, and friends, as well as their experiences of receiving such treatment. The relatively small changes suggest that this domain remained generally stable across the grade groups.

Overall, Table 15 indicates that agency freedom remained relatively high across most domains, but the changes varied considerably by grade. The strongest improvements were observed in GESI Curriculum among PS **(+0.53),** Bodily Integrity among MSS **(+0.55),** UIPIT among PS **(+0.42)** and MSS **(+0.43),** and Freedom from Exploitation among PS **(+0.39)**. These improvements may suggest that the LIKE Club created opportunities for children to express views, understand their rights, seek support, participate in activities, and exercise choices within their immediate school and social environments. At the same time, the declines, particularly in Mental Well-being, Religion and Identity, Participation, and Nutritional Well-being, indicate areas where children's perceived freedom to make choices may have remained constrained. Some of these limitations may be associated with factors beyond the direct influence of the LIKE Club, such as structured school routines, curriculum requirements, school food arrangements, and children's broader social environments. Continued opportunities for student voice, emotional expression, decision-making, participation, and choice may therefore be important for strengthening agency freedom across all grade levels.

Table 11: *Agency Freedom by Grade*

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***
Aspiration	*9.27*	9.33	9.08	9.07	9.16	9.16
Autonomy	9.07	9.17	9.06	9.26	9.21	9.07
Bodily Integrity	9.24	9.15	8.80	9.35	8.80	9.35
Education	9.35	9.26	9.21	9.30	9.21	9.30
Freedom from Exploitation	8.99	9.15	9.21	9.38	9.21	9.19
GESI Curriculum	8.65	9.04	9.44	9.18	9.44	9.15
Love, Care and Respect	9.18	8.89	8.93	9.25	8.87	8.87
Mental Well-being	8.61	8.90	8.54	8.19	8.54	7.43
Mobility	8.79	9.18	9.13	9.17	9.13	8.82
Nutritional Well-being	9.00	8.86	8.80	8.90	8.80	8.64
Participation	9.01	9.00	9.13	9.01	9.13	8.61
Physical Health	8.97	8.74	8.80	9.32	8.80	8.92
Shelter and Environment	9.17	9.20	9.31	9.48	9.31	9.24
Social Relations	9.31	9.34	8.96	9.28	8.99	8.99
UIPIT	9.13	8.99	8.54	9.55	8.54	8.97
Religion and Identity	9.34	9.28	9.20	9.46	8.79	8.79

5.3.4 Agency Achievement

Table 12 presents the baseline and endline findings on agency achievement by grade, focusing on the choices and actions that children have actually exercised across different capability domains. The interpretation below focuses on the domains with the largest positive and negative changes**.**

The largest positive change was observed in Mental Well-being among MSS children, which increased from **8.29** at baseline to **8.95** at endline, representing an increase of **0.66** points. This improvement suggests that MSS children had greater actual experiences of exercising choices that supported their emotional well-being. The items under this domain include deciding when and with whom to share their feelings, finding ways to remain positive when facing difficulties, and making decisions that support their emotional well-being**.** The improvement may indicate that children increasingly acted on their choices to communicate their feelings, seek appropriate support, and adopt ways of coping with challenges. This may reflect the contribution of LIKE Club activities in creating opportunities for children to express themselves and make decisions related to their emotional well-being.

The second-largest positive change was observed in Bodily Integrity among MSS children, increasing from **8.70** to **9.34 (+0.64)**. This indicates improvement in the extent to which children actually exercised choices and actions related to their safety and protection. The items include recognising violence, bullying and inappropriate or unsafe behaviour, understanding their rights and possible actions, avoiding or responding to bullying, and being free from violence and abuse at school and home. The improvement may suggest that MSS children became more able to act upon their awareness of personal safety and make appropriate choices to protect themselves from harmful situations.

In contrast, the largest decline was observed in Participation among MSS children, decreasing from **9.34** to **8.70 (-0.64)**. This indicates a reduction in the extent to which children actually exercised choices through participating in conversations outside the classroom, taking part in extracurricular activities and sports, raising their hands to ask questions, and responding to teachers' questions**.** Although the score remains relatively high, the decline may suggest that MSS children had fewer opportunities or were less likely to exercise their choices through active participation at endline. This finding may warrant further attention to ensure that older children continue to have meaningful opportunities to express their views and participate actively in school activities.

The second-largest decline occurred in Autonomy among LSS children, decreasing from **9.19** to **8.57 (-0.62)**. This decline suggests a reduction in the extent to which LSS children actually exercised choices concerning what they wear, how they spend their free time, participation in personal development activities, use of their time, pursuing hobbies, and doing certain activities without always requiring parental permission**.** The finding may indicate that, despite generally high levels of autonomy, children experienced fewer opportunities to exercise independent choices in these areas at endline.

Another notable decline was observed in Religion and Identity among MSS children, which decreased from **9.39 to 8.84 (-0.55)**. This domain includes actual choices and practices such as participating in religious activities, practising one's religion freely, respecting the religious beliefs of others, practising religious virtues, celebrating festivals, visiting places of worship, and engaging with teachings related to goodness**.** The decline may indicate that MSS children reported fewer actual choices or actions in these areas at endline. This should not necessarily be interpreted as a reduction in religious freedom; rather, it reflects a lower level of reported agency achievement in terms of the choices and practices they actually exercised.

Overall, the findings show that the strongest improvement in agency achievement occurred in MSS children's Mental Well-being **(+0.66)** and Bodily Integrity **(+0.64)**, suggesting increased exercise of choices related to emotional well-being, personal safety, and protection. In contrast, the largest declines occurred in MSS Participation **(-0.64),** LSS Autonomy **(-0.62),** and MSS Religion and Identity **(-0.55)**. These changes highlight the importance of continuing to provide children, particularly those in LSS and MSS, with opportunities to make and act upon their own choices, participate meaningfully, express their views, manage their emotions, and exercise decision-making in everyday situations**.** The positive changes may suggest a contribution of the LIKE Club intervention, while the declines indicate areas requiring continued attention and support.

Table 12: *Agency Achievement by Grade*

	Baseline			***Endline***		
Capability Domain	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***	***PS***	***LSS***	***MSS***
Aspiration	*9.24*	9.21	8.79	8.81	8.79	8.82
Autonomy	9.02	9.19	9.13	9.00	8.57	8.57
Bodily Integrity	9.01	9.04	8.70	9.28	8.70	9.34
Education	9.30	9.31	9.29	9.35	9.05	9.05
Freedom from Exploitation	9.04	9.30	8.98	9.35	9.05	9.05
GESI Curriculum	8.65	9.36	9.63	9.12	9.63	9.18
Love, Care and Respect	9.11	8.99	8.89	9.28	9.28	9.10
Mental Well-being	8.75	8.84	8.29	9.19	8.29	8.95
Mobility	8.70	9.09	9.30	9.26	9.30	8.74
Nutritional Well-being	9.07	9.00	8.82	9.10	8.90	8.90
Participation	9.03	9.30	9.34	9.05	9.34	8.70
Physical Health	8.88	8.86	8.78	9.10	8.78	8.63
Shelter and Environment	9.22	9.44	9.43	9.46	9.43	9.28
Social Relations	9.29	9.34	8.97	9.38	8.94	8.94
UIPIT	9.15	9.10	8.76	9.40	8.79	8.79
Religion and Identity	9.29	9.40	9.39	9.42	9.39	8.84

5.4 Ethnicity

5.4.1 Well-being Freedom (Baseline)

Figure 12 presents well-being freedom across ethnic groups, showing generally high perceived opportunities across most domains, with some variations between groups. Overall, Kurtoep students report the highest levels of well-being freedom across multiple domains, frequently reaching very high scores, including Religion and Identity (10.00), Aspiration (10.00), Shelter and Environment (10.00), Social Relations (10.00), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (10.00), and Participation (10.00). They also report strong Mobility (9.92), Bodily Integrity (9.96), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Curriculum (9.87), suggesting very favourable perceptions of institutional support, autonomy, and engagement opportunities.

Doya students report strong Mobility (9.63), Shelter and Environment (9.63), Participation (9.50), and Aspiration (9.42), suggesting favourable perceptions of movement and engagement opportunities, although lower scores appear in Love, Care and Respect (8.54), Physical Health (8.25), and Mental Wellbeing (8.08). The Non-categorised group shows generally positive scores across domains, including Love, Care and Respect (9.06), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.02), and Social Relations (9.03), but comparatively lower Mobility (7.47) and Mental Wellbeing (8.25).

Bumtap students also demonstrate strong perceived freedoms, particularly in Education (9.93), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think (9.86), Shelter and Environment (9.80), Participation (9.67), and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.67). However, a comparatively lower score is observed in Nutritional Wellbeing (6.57), indicating a potential area of concern relative to other groups. Among Ngalop students, perceived opportunities remain consistently high across most domains, including Religion and Identity (9.45), Participation (9.43), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.49), Mobility (9.27), and Education (9.19), reflecting positive perceptions of both relational and institutional conditions. Lhotsham students similarly report favourable levels of freedom in Social Relations (9.37), Religion and Identity (9.30), Mobility (9.19), and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.11), although slightly lower scores appear in Mental Wellbeing (8.69) and Nutritional Wellbeing (8.87).

Sharchop students show strong perceived freedoms in Love, Care and Respect (9.42), Education (9.25), Physical Health (9.13), and Religion and Identity (9.20), while moderate scores appear in Mental Wellbeing (8.43) and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (8.72). Khengpa students demonstrate relatively high scores in Education (9.61), Autonomy (9.36), Understand, Interpret, Plan, Imagine, and Think (9.40), and Religion and Identity (9.40), but somewhat lower levels in Shelter and Environment (8.03) and Mental Wellbeing (8.04).

Across all cultural groups, Mental Wellbeing tends to remain comparatively lower than relational and institutional domains, indicating a potential cross-cutting area for further support. Overall, the findings suggest that while children from different cultural backgrounds perceive high levels of well-being freedom, the specific strengths vary across groups, reflecting diverse lived experiences and contextual conditions.

It is also important to interpret these findings in light of the sample distribution across cultural groups. Groups such as Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya represent relatively smaller respondent populations in the dataset. The very high scores observed for these groups across several domains may therefore reflect the influence of smaller sample sizes, where responses are less dispersed and more likely to cluster at the higher end of the scale. In contrast, Lhotsham respondents constitute the largest proportion of the sample, followed by Sharchop and Ngalop groups, which provide more stable estimates due to larger representation. Consequently, while the high scores among smaller groups indicate positive perceived experiences, they should be interpreted with caution and understood as indicative rather than directly comparable to the larger ethnic groups.

Overall, the results highlight broadly positive well-being freedom across cultural communities, while also underscoring the importance of considering sample composition when interpreting group differences.

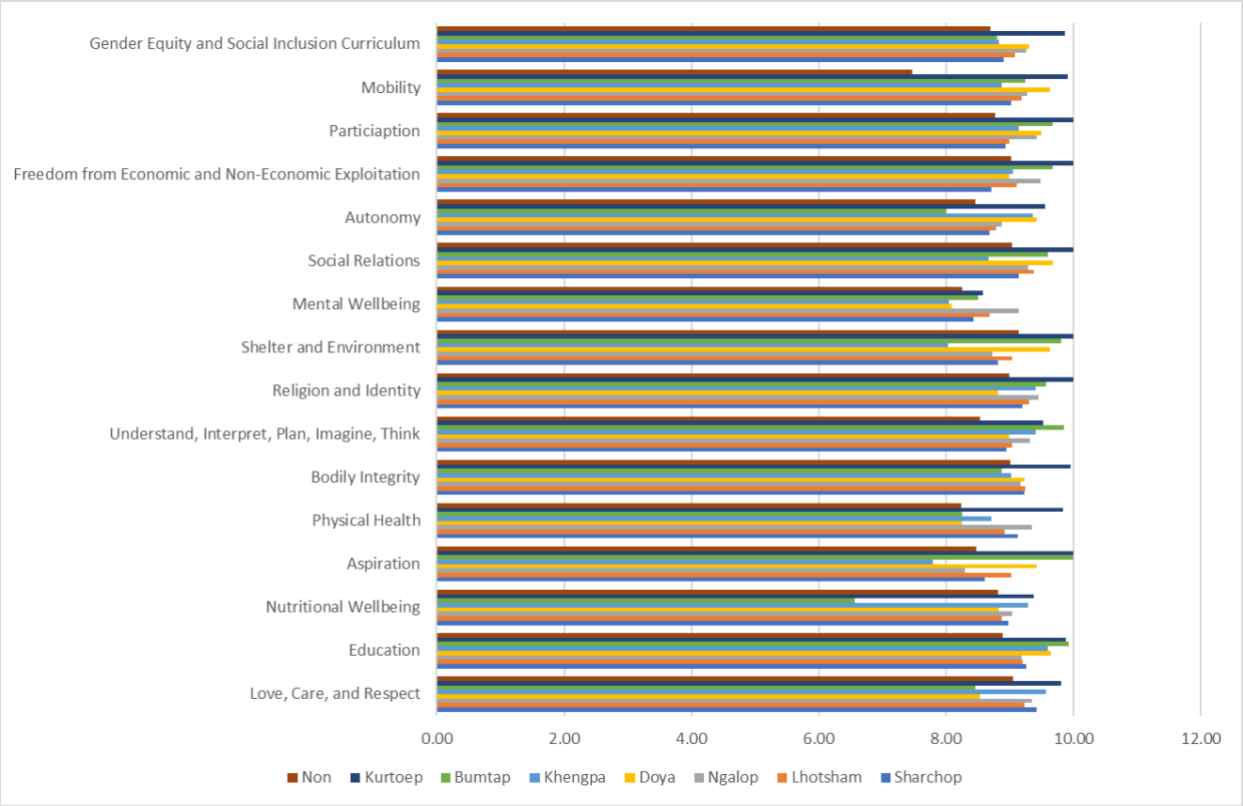

Figure 12: Well-being Freedom by Ethnicity

5.4.2 Well-being Freedom (Endline)

The endline findings for Well-being Freedom by ethnicity show variation across the ethnic groups. Since well-being freedom refers to **"I am able to…"**, the interpretation focuses on the extent to which children perceived themselves as being able to exercise capabilities in different areas of their lives.

The highest score was recorded among Kurteop children for Love, Care and Respect **(9.80)**. This indicates a very high level of perceived ability to show love, care, and respect towards parents, teachers, elders, younger children, and friends, as well as to experience love, care, and respect from others. The high score may suggest that Kurteop children had strong opportunities to develop and maintain positive interpersonal relationships within their families, school, and peer groups.

The **lowest score** was observed among Other children for Freedom from Exploitation **(7.85)**. This domain relates to children's ability to access information about their legal rights, attend school regularly without missing school for work or household chores, and have adequate time for studying rather than being engaged in work or domestic responsibilities**.** The comparatively lower score may indicate that children in this category perceived greater constraints in exercising these aspects of well-being freedom. However, because the Other category may represent a small and heterogeneous group, the finding should be interpreted cautiously.

Another notably high score was recorded for Bodily Integrity among Khengpa children **(9.83)**. This suggests a strong perceived ability to feel safe at home, in the community, and at school; recognize violence, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour; understand their rights and possible actions; and remain free from bullying, violence, and abuse**.**

In contrast, GESI Curriculum among Sharchop children **(8.24)** was relatively low compared with the other ethnic groups. This domain concerns children's ability to access learning and information related to healthcare and hygiene, religious and social tolerance, gender equity and social inclusion, and the equal treatment of persons with disabilities and people in need**.** The lower score may suggest that Sharchop children perceived somewhat fewer opportunities to develop or exercise these aspects of well-being through the curriculum.

Overall, the endline data indicate that Kurteop children recorded the highest score in Love, Care and Respect **(9.80),** while the Other group recorded the lowest score in Freedom from Exploitation **(7.85)**. Khengpa children also showed a very high level of Bodily Integrity **(9.83)**, whereas Sharchop children had a comparatively lower score in GESI Curriculum **(8.24)**. These differences suggest that children's perceived well-being freedoms varied across capability domains and ethnic groups at endline.

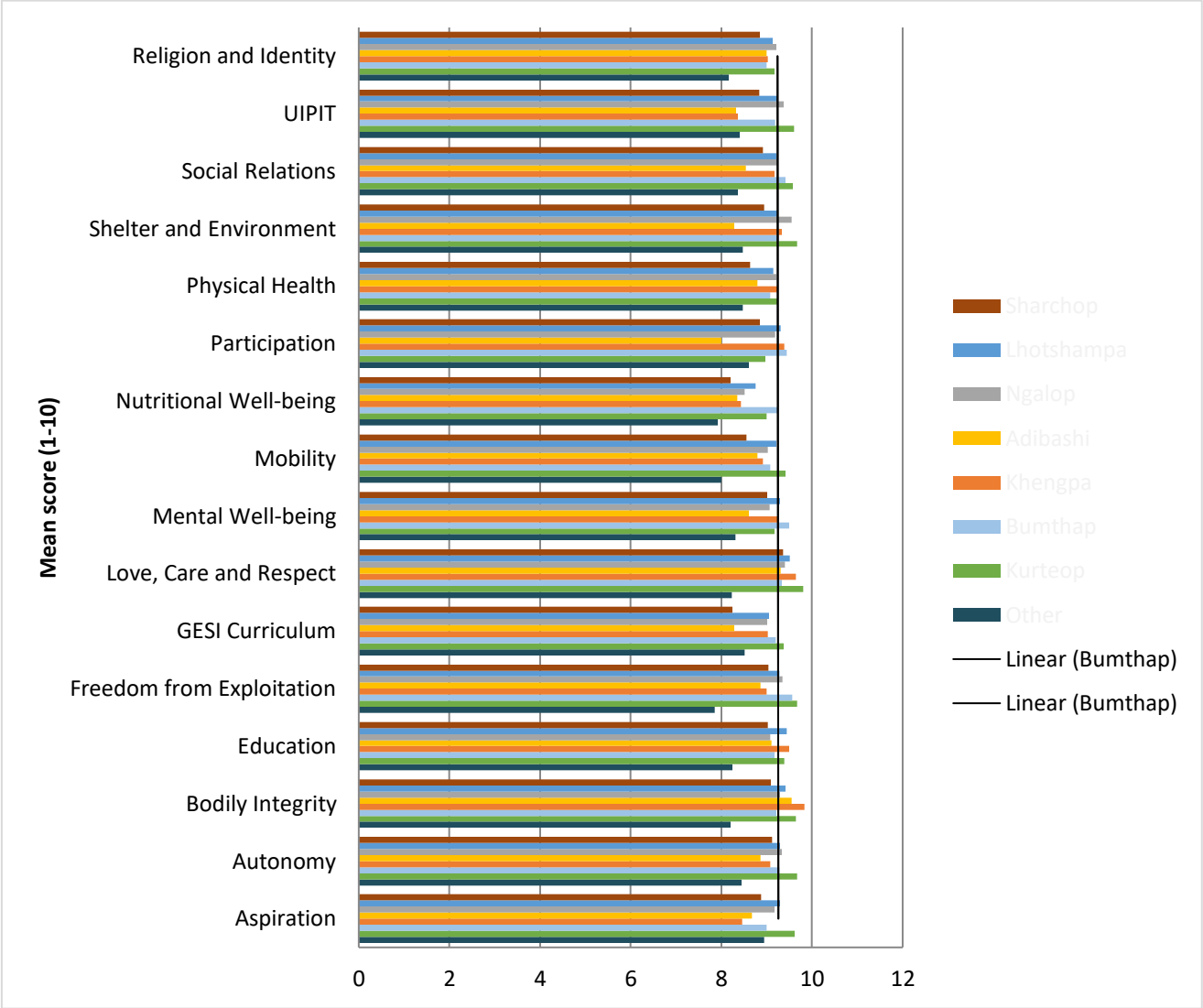

Figure 13: Wellbeing Freedom by Ethnicity

5.4.3 Well-being Freedom: Comparison of Baseline and Endline

The baseline and endline findings show that well-being freedom remained generally high across ethnic groups, but the pattern of change varied considerably by group and capability domain. The comparison should be interpreted cautiously because the ethnic categories are not completely identical across the two datasets—for example, Doya and Non-categorised appear in the baseline description, whereas Other appears at endline. Therefore, the clearest comparisons are for groups that can be reasonably matched, such as Kurteop/Kurtoep, Bumthap/Bumtap, Khengpa, Ngalop, Lhotshampa/Lhotsham, and Sharchop.

The comparison between baseline and endline indicates that well-being freedom remained relatively high across the ethnic groups, although changes differed across capability domains. Since well-being

freedom reflects **"I am able to…"**, the changes indicate differences in children's perceived ability to experience or exercise various aspects of well-being.

Among Kurteop students, several domains that had recorded perfect or near-perfect scores at baseline showed moderate declines at endline. Participation decreased from **10.00** to **8.97**, representing the largest decline for this group among the reported baseline domains. Similarly, Religion and Identity declined from **10.00** to **9.17**, Social Relations from **10.00** to **9.58**, and Aspiration from **10.00** to **9.62**. **Mobility** declined from **9.92** to **9.42**, while Bodily Integrity decreased slightly from **9.96** to **9.65**. These changes suggest that although Kurteop students continued to report high levels of well-being freedom, their endline responses were somewhat less positive than their exceptionally high baseline scores. The decline may partly reflect the ceiling effect associated with the very high baseline scores, leaving limited scope for further improvement.

A contrasting pattern was observed among Bumthap students, particularly in Nutritional Well-being. The score increased substantially from **6.57** at baseline to **9.24** at endline, an improvement of **2.67** points, representing the most pronounced positive change among the comparable groups and domains. This suggests a considerable improvement in children's perceived ability to experience adequate nutrition, including having sufficient meals, access to protein, vegetables and fruits, satisfying hunger, and accessing snacks or additional food when needed. Other domains among Bumthap students showed more modest declines, including **Education (9.93** to **9.17)**, UIPIT **(9.86** to **9.19)**, and Shelter and Environment **(9.80** to **9.27)**. Despite these decreases, the endline scores remained relatively high.

For Khengpa students, notable improvements were observed in Shelter and Environment and Mental Well-being. Shelter and Environment increased from **8.03** to **9.33 (+1.30)**, while Mental Well-being increased from **8.04** to **9.25 (+1.21)**. These changes suggest improved perceptions of being able to experience a clean and supportive living and school environment and to manage aspects of emotional well-being. Mental well-being includes being happy at school, managing fear or worry, deciding when and with whom to share feelings, and finding ways to remain positive when facing difficulties. However, UIPIT declined from **9.40** to **8.36**, indicating a reduction in perceived ability to plan, imagine, interpret information, and seek clarification or assistance when needed.

Among Ngalop students, the changes were comparatively modest. Education declined from **9.19** to **9.08**, Religion and Identity from **9.45** to **9.22**, and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation from **9.49** to **9.35**. Participation also declined from **9.43** to **9.18**, while Mobility decreased from **9.27** to **9.02**. These relatively small reductions suggest that Ngalop students' perceptions remained broadly stable and positive across the measured domains.

For Lhotshampa students, the findings show some improvement in selected areas. Mental Well-being increased from **8.69** to **9.30 (+0.61)**, suggesting improved perceptions of being able to experience happiness at school, manage difficult emotions, share feelings appropriately, and find ways to remain positive when facing challenges. Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation also

increased from **9.11** to **9.28 (+0.17)**, indicating improved perceived ability to attend school regularly and have adequate time for learning rather than being occupied by work or household responsibilities. Mobility remained almost unchanged, increasing slightly from **9.19** to **9.21**. However, Religion and Identity declined from **9.30** to **9.13**, while Nutritional Well-being decreased slightly from **8.87** to **8.75**.

Among Sharchop students, several positive changes were observed. Mental Well-being increased from **8.43** to **9.01 (+0.58)**, indicating improved perceived ability to manage emotions, share feelings, and maintain positivity when facing difficulties. Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation increased from **8.72** to **9.04 (+0.32)**, suggesting improved perceived opportunities to attend school regularly and have time for study. However, Religion and Identity decreased from **9.20** to **8.85 (-0.35)**, while Education declined slightly from **9.25** to **9.03**. Love, Care and Respect also showed a small reduction from **9.42** to **9.36**, although the endline level remained high.

Overall, the comparison indicates that the strongest positive changes were observed in Bumthap students' Nutritional Well-being **(+2.67),** Khengpa students' Shelter and Environment **(+1.30)** and Mental Well-being **(+1.21)**. These improvements suggest that some ethnic groups experienced particularly positive changes in specific aspects of their perceived well-being freedom. In contrast, the largest declines among the comparable groups were observed in Kurteop Participation **(-1.03)** and Khengpa UIPIT **(-1.04)**. These declines should be interpreted in relation to the specific experiences measured by these domains rather than as an overall reduction in well-being freedom.

The comparison also shows a recurring improvement in Mental Well-being among Khengpa, Lhotshampa, and Sharchop students, whereas some domains that had exceptionally high baseline scores, particularly among Kurteop and Bumthap students, declined at endline while still remaining relatively high. This suggests that the intervention period may have been associated with domain-specific rather than uniform changes across ethnic groups. The variation may reflect differences in children's lived experiences, school and community contexts, and the relatively different sizes of the ethnic groups. Therefore, the findings are best understood as indicating changes in perceived well-being freedom within each group rather than as evidence that one ethnic group experienced better outcomes than another.

5.4.4 Well-being Achievement (Baseline)

Figure 14 presents the distribution of well-being achievement across ethnic groups. Overall, scores are high across most domains, though some variation is observed between groups.Among the larger respondent groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) well-being achievement remains consistently strong across domains. For example, Education scores range from 9.01 (Lhotsham) to 9.14 (Sharchop) and 8.95 (Ngalop)**,** while Shelter and Environment scores remain similarly high at 9.27 (Lhotsham)**,** 9.34 (Sharchop), and 9.45 (Ngalop)**.** Social Relations are also positively perceived across these groups, with scores of 9.33 (Lhotsham)**,** 9.12 (Sharchop)**,** and 9.25 (Ngalop). These patterns suggest relatively uniform achievement outcomes among the three major ethnic categories

represented in the sample.

Some smaller ethnic groups particularly Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya show comparatively higher scores in several domains. For instance, Kurtoep students report very high scores in Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation **(**10.00**),** Shelter and Environment (9.80)**,** and Participation **(**9.50**),** while Bumtap students show strong results in Shelter and Environment (9.60) and Participation (9.67). Doya students also demonstrate high achievement in Education (9.82) and Participation (9.25).

However, these elevated scores should be interpreted cautiously, as these ethnic categories represent relatively smaller respondent groups; smaller sample sizes often produce higher variability and may inflate mean scores compared to larger groups.

Across all ethnicities, Mental Wellbeing remains comparatively lower than other domains, ranging from **7**.85 (Non-categorised) to 8.81 (Lhotsham)**,** indicating a common area of concern regardless of ethnic background. Mobility also shows variability, with notably lower scores among Khengpa (6.92) and Non-categorised students (7.27) compared to higher scores among Kurtoep (9.58) and Bumtap (9.25).

Overall, the findings suggest that while well-being achievement is generally positive across ethnic groups, differences observed among smaller ethnic categories should be interpreted in light of sample size distribution. The three largest groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) demonstrate relatively stable and comparable achievement patterns, indicating broadly equitable well-being outcomes across major ethnic community.

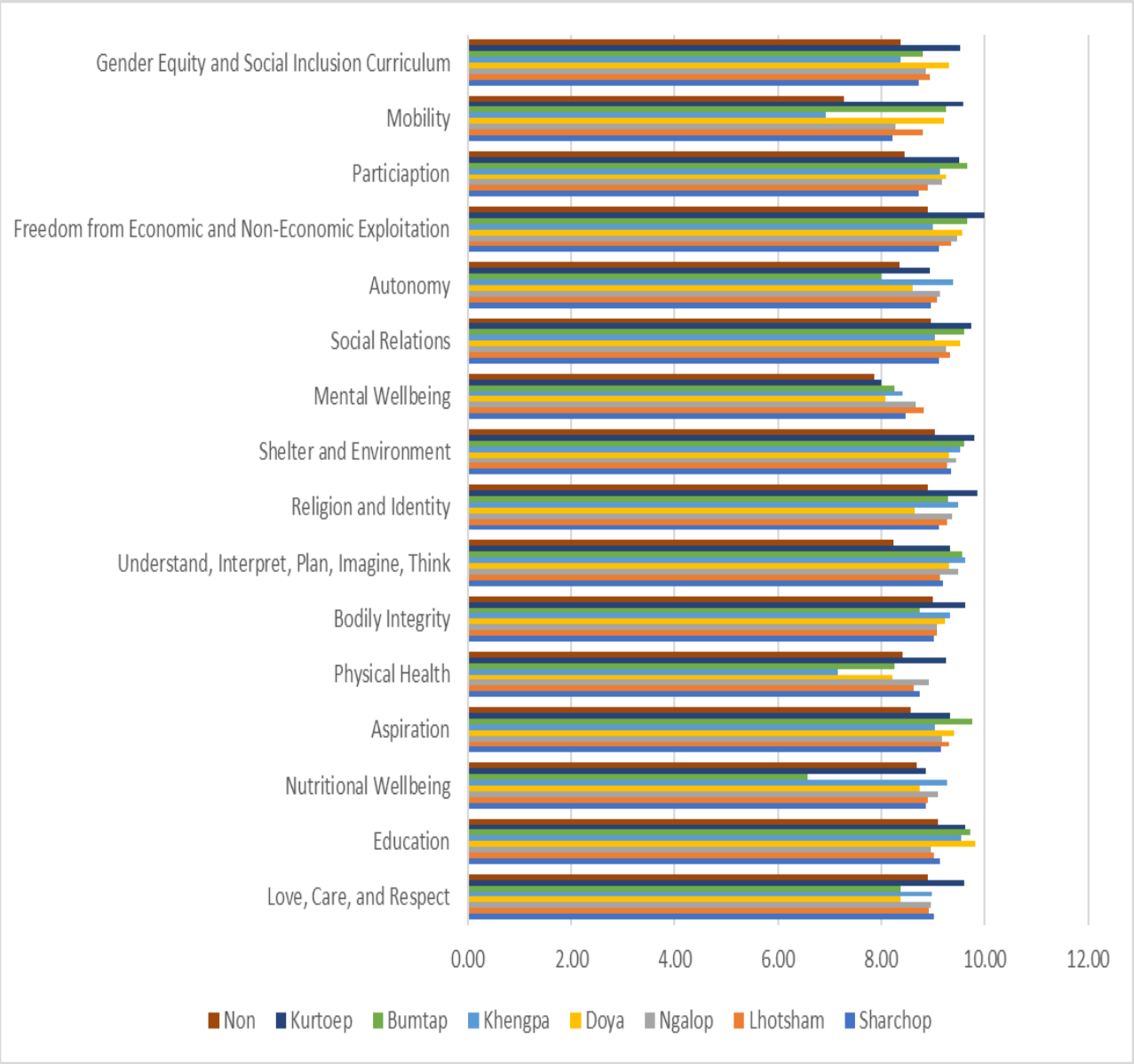

Figure 14: Well-being Achievement by Ethnicity

5.4.5 Well-being Achievement (Endline)

As reflected in Figure 15, the endline findings for Well-being Achievement by ethnicity show generally high scores across the capability domains, with some variation between ethnic groups. The highest and lowest scores provide insight into areas where children reported stronger or comparatively weaker experiences and achievements.

The highest score was recorded among Khengpa students for Shelter and Environment **(9.77)**. This indicates a very high level of reported achievement in relation to having proper and adequate housing, maintaining a clean residence, experiencing a clean school environment, and contributing to cleanliness in both the school and home environment**.** The high score suggests that Khengpa students generally reported favourable living and school environmental conditions and actual participation in maintaining these environments.

The lowest score was recorded for the Other group in Freedom from Exploitation **(7.67)**. This domain relates to children's actual experiences of having information about their legal rights, attending school regularly without missing school because of work or household chores, and having sufficient time for study rather than being engaged in work or domestic responsibilities. The comparatively lower score may indicate that children in this category reported fewer favourable experiences in these areas. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously if the Other category has a small number of respondents, as a small sample can produce less stable estimates.

Another relatively high score was observed among Bumthap students for Shelter and Environment **(9.67)**, which similarly reflects favourable experiences regarding housing, cleanliness, and children's involvement in maintaining clean surroundings. In contrast, Bumthap students recorded a relatively low score in UIPIT **(7.81)**. This domain concerns actual achievements in planning for the future, imagining art and crafts, creating or imagining poems and stories, understanding and interpreting information, and seeking help from friends, parents, or teachers when they do not understand something. The lower score may indicate that these aspects of children's cognitive and creative engagement were less strongly experienced compared with other areas of well-being.

Overall, the findings suggest that Shelter and Environment represents a particularly strong area of well-being achievement, especially among Khengpa students **(9.77)**, while Freedom from Exploitation among the Other group **(7.67)** represents the lowest reported achievement. The findings highlight the importance of continuing to strengthen children's protection from excessive work and household responsibilities while maintaining supportive living, learning, and environmental conditions.

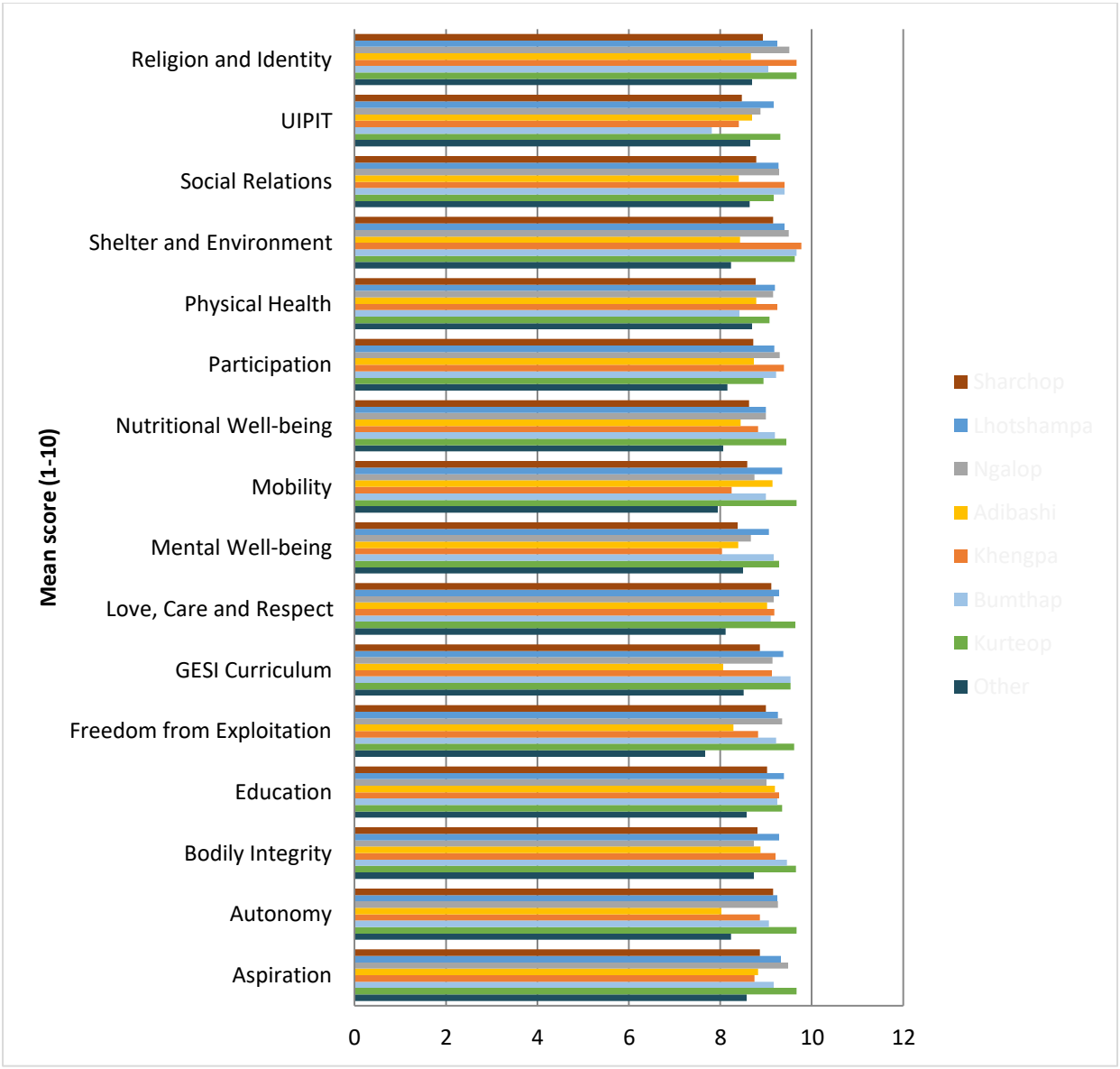

Figure 15: Well-being Achievement by Ethnicity

5.4.6 Comparison of Baseline and Endline for Well-being Achievement by Ethnicity

The comparison of baseline and endline findings shows that well-being achievement remained generally high across the ethnic groups, although the pattern of change varied across capability domains and ethnic categories.

Among the larger ethnic groups (Lhotshampa, Sharchop, and Ngalop), the endline findings continue to show generally high levels of well-being achievement, although some domains changed from baseline. For example, for Lhotshampa, Education increased slightly from the baseline value of **9.01** to **9.39 at** endline, while Shelter and Environment increased from **9.27** to **9.40**. Social Relations also decreased slightly from **9.33** to **9.27**. These relatively small changes suggest that well-being achievement among Lhotshampa students remained broadly stable and positive.

For Sharchop students, the endline scores also remained high in several domains. Education decreased slightly from **9.14** at baseline to **9.02** at endline, while Shelter and Environment decreased from **9.34** to **9.16**. Social Relations declined from **9.12** to **8.78**. Although these changes represent some reduction,

the endline scores remain relatively high, indicating that Sharchop students continued to report favourable achievement in these areas.

Among Ngalop students, the pattern was similarly positive but showed some variation. The baseline description reported strong achievement in Education **(8.95),** Shelter and Environment **(9.45),** and Social Relations **(9.25)**. At endline, these scores were **9.01, 9.50,** and 9**.29**, respectively. Thus, Education increased slightly, while Shelter and Environment and Social Relations also showed small improvements. This suggests relatively stable or slightly improved achievement among Ngalop students in these domains.

The smaller ethnic groups continued to show high scores in several areas at endline. Kurteop students, who had very high baseline scores in Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation **(10.00),** Shelter and Environment **(9.80),** and Participation **(9.50)**, recorded endline scores of **9.61, 9.63,** and **8.94**, respectively. Thus, these domains declined from their exceptionally high baseline levels, although the endline scores remained high. The reduction may partly reflect the limited scope for further improvement when baseline scores are already close to the upper end of the scale.

For Bumthap students, baseline Shelter and Environment **(9.60)** increased slightly to **9.67** at endline, while Participation decreased from **9.67** to **9.22**. This indicates that the strong achievement in the environmental domain was maintained, whereas participation showed some reduction. Notably, UIPIT was relatively low at endline (**7.81**), suggesting that actual achievements related to planning, imagining, interpreting information, and seeking assistance may require further attention.

The Mental Well-being pattern is particularly important when comparing the two periods. At baseline, mental well-being was identified as a comparatively weaker domain across ethnic groups, with the baseline description reporting scores ranging from **7.85** to **8.81**. At endline, the scores remained comparatively lower for some groups, including Khengpa **(8.04),** Sharchop **(8.38),** Adibashi **(8.39),** and Ngalop **(8.67)**. However, Lhotshampa increased from **8.81** at baseline to **9.06** at endline, suggesting improvement in their reported achievement related to happiness, emotional experiences, sharing feelings, and maintaining positivity when facing difficulties.

There were also notable changes in Mobility. At baseline, Mobility was particularly low among Khengpa **(6.92)** and the Non-categorised group (**7.27**), while Kurteop and Bumtap reported much higher scores. At endline, Khengpa Mobility increased substantially to **8.25**, indicating an improvement in children's reported experiences of going to school, commuting safely, visiting friends, and moving around their communities. Kurteop, however, remained high at **9.67**, while Bumthap recorded **9.00**. This suggests that some of the groups with lower baseline mobility experienced improvement by endline.

Overall, the baseline-to-endline comparison indicates that well-being achievement remained broadly positive across ethnic groups, but the changes were not uniform. The larger ethnic groups (Lhotshampa, Sharchop, and Ngalop) continued to demonstrate relatively stable and high achievement, while some smaller groups showed substantial changes in particular domains. Khengpa's improvement in Mobility

and Lhotshampa's improvement in Mental Well-being are notable positive changes, while declines were observed in some domains that had exceptionally high baseline scores, particularly among Kurteop students.

The findings therefore suggest that the intervention period was associated with domain-specific changes rather than a uniform increase across all dimensions of well-being achievement. The results should also be interpreted in light of differences in ethnic group size, particularly because the smaller groups may produce more variable mean scores. Thus, the findings are more appropriately understood as showing changes in reported well-being achievement within ethnic groups rather than establishing that one ethnic group experienced better outcomes than another.

5.4.7 Agency Freedom (Baseline)

Figure 16 shows the patterns of agency freedom across ethnic groups, highlighting the generally positive perception of freedom seen by students across most domains. Children from different ethnic backgrounds report that they feel able to make choices and exercise control in key areas of their lives, suggesting a broadly enabling social and institutional environment.

Among the larger ethnic groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop), the scores are closely aligned across domains such as Education, Social Relations, Love, Care and Respect, and Religion and Identity. This relatively tight clustering indicates that children from these major ethnic communities experience comparable levels of freedom in both school-related and relational contexts. The consistency across these groups suggests that agency freedom is not markedly differentiated along major ethnic lines.

For some of the smaller ethnic groups, including Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya, several domains reflect very high scores. These include areas such as Bodily Integrity (9.71, 9.29, 8,75 and 9.85 respectively); Participation (10, 9.08, 9.67 and 9.08), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (9.33, 9.17, 9.67 and 9.83), and Religion and Identity (9.81, 9.45, 9.43, 8.83). While this may indicate strong perceived autonomy, voice, and future orientation within these communities, the results should be interpreted carefully, as smaller sample sizes can amplify the effect of individual responses on overall averages.

At the lower end of the distribution, a few domains display comparatively modest scores, even though they remain generally positive overall. In particular, Mental Wellbeing emerges as the lowest-performing domain across groups, with several scores clustering in the high 7 to low 8 range (including 7.83 for Khengpa and 7.97 for Non-category). This suggests that while students report strong agency and freedom in many structural and relational domains, their internal emotional and psychological wellbeing may require closer attention. Similarly, Nutritional Wellbeing shows notable variation, including the single lowest value observed (6.71 for Bumthap). Although most groups report scores above 8 in this domain, the presence of this lower value indicates that access to or perceptions of adequate nutrition may not be equally experienced across all groups. This variation slightly widens the spread compared to more consistently high-scoring domains such as Education or Social Relations.

Other domains that appear on the comparatively lower side include Mobility (with a low of 7.48 for Non-category), Physical Health (8.21 and 8.25 in Doya and Khengpa respectively), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (8.26–8.80 for Non-category and Bumthap respectively). While these scores are not low in absolute terms, they are relatively lower when compared to domains such as Participation, Religion and Identity, or Shelter and Environment, which frequently approach or reach scores above 9.5 and even 10.

Overall, the pattern suggests that students' perceived agency is strongest in participatory, relational, and identity-related domains, whereas wellbeing-related dimensions, particularly mental and nutritional wellbeing, reflect comparatively lower perceptions. These areas may represent important focal points for targeted policy or programmatic interventions.

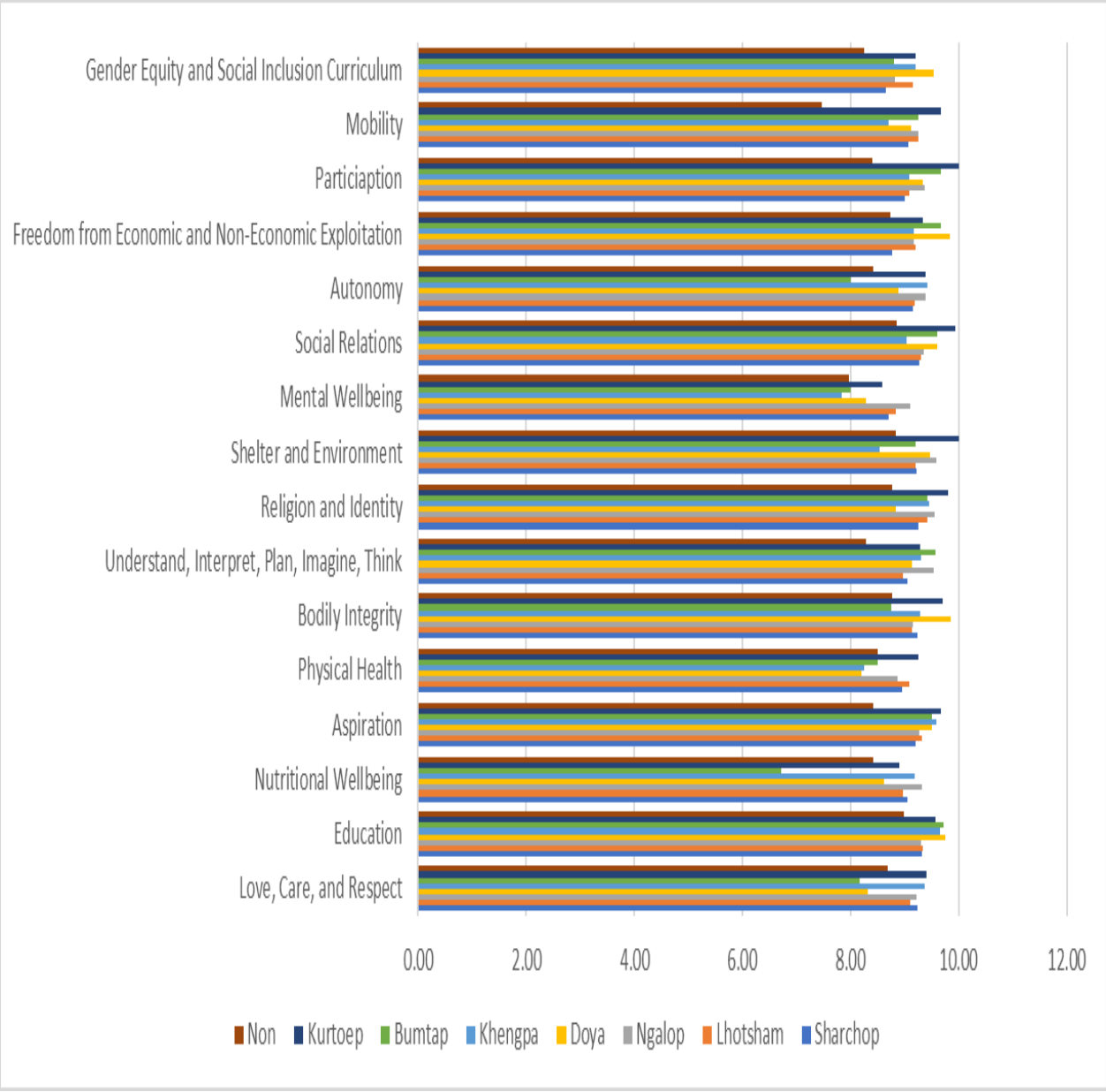

Figure 16: Agency Freedom by Ethnicity

5.4.8 Agency Freedom (Endline)

Figure 17 presents the endline findings on agency freedom by ethnicity. Agency freedom reflects **"I choose to…"**, so the interpretation focuses on the extent to which children perceived that they could make choices and exercise decision-making in different areas of their lives.

The highest score was recorded among Khengpa students for Shelter and Environment **(9.83)**. This suggests that Khengpa students reported a high level of ability to make choices and take action related to their living and school environment. The domain includes being able to maintain a proper and clean residence, contribute to keeping the school environment clean, and participate in maintaining cleanliness at home and school. The high score therefore indicates strong perceived agency in contributing to and managing aspects of their immediate environment.

The lowest score was recorded among Khengpa students for Mental Well-being **(4.58)**. This is substantially lower than the scores reported for other capability domains. Since Mental Well-being includes the ability to decide when and with whom to share feelings, find ways to remain positive when facing difficulties, and make choices that support emotional well-being, the low score may indicate that Khengpa students perceived considerably less freedom to exercise choices in managing and expressing their emotions. It may also suggest limitations in deciding whom to approach for emotional support or in choosing strategies to cope with difficult situations.

A further notable finding is the relatively low Mental Well-being score among Sharchop students **(6.94)**, followed by Ngalop students (**7.48**) and Adibashi students (**7.89**). In contrast, Kurteop students recorded **8.54** in this domain. This pattern reinforces Mental Well-being as an area where perceived agency varies considerably across ethnic groups.

At the higher end**,** Kurteop students recorded particularly high scores in Autonomy **(9.67),** Mobility **(9.67),** and Freedom from Exploitation **(9.67)**. These scores indicate strong perceived ability to make choices about how to spend free time, pursue hobbies and personal development activities, move independently within their community, attend school regularly, and have sufficient time for study rather than work or household responsibilities**.**

Overall, the endline findings indicate that agency freedom was particularly strong in areas such as shelter and environment, autonomy, mobility, and freedom from exploitation**,** while Mental Well-being showed substantial variation and included the lowest score in the table**.** The particularly low Khengpa score for Mental Well-being warrants attention to children's opportunities to express feelings, seek emotional support, and choose appropriate ways of coping with difficulties**.**

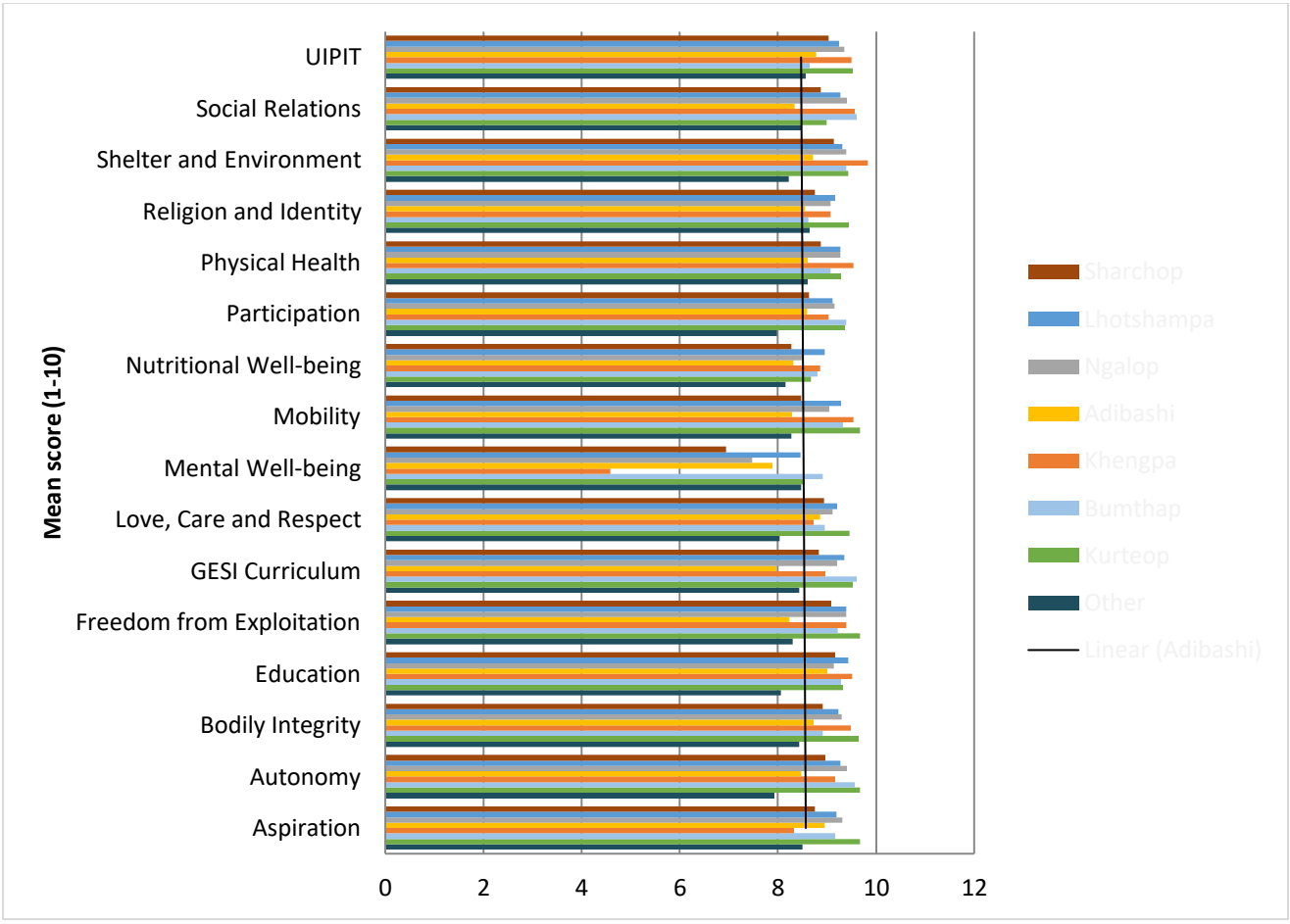

Figure 17: Agency Freedom for Ethnicity (Endline)

5.4.9 Comparison of Agency Freedom at Baseline and Endline

Figure 16 presents the patterns of Agency Freedom across ethnic groups at baseline and endline. Agency Freedom refers to the extent to which children perceive that they are able to make choices and exercise control in important areas of their lives. Overall, the baseline findings indicated generally positive perceptions of agency across ethnic groups, particularly in domains related to participation, religion and identity, freedom from exploitation, and bodily integrity. At endline, this generally positive pattern remained evident, although some domains showed notable differences across ethnic groups.

At baseline, several smaller ethnic groups reported particularly high levels of Agency Freedom. Kurtoep students, for example, recorded very high scores in Bodily Integrity **(9.71),** Participation **(10.00),** Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation **(9.33),** and Religion and Identity **(9.81)**. Similarly, Bumtap students recorded high scores in Participation **(9.67)** and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation **(9.67)**, while Doya students reported high scores in Bodily Integrity **(9.85)** and Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation **(9.83)**. These findings suggested that children in these groups perceived considerable freedom to participate, express themselves, remain protected from exploitation, and exercise choices related to their identity and social relationships. However, these results should be interpreted cautiously because smaller ethnic-group samples can make average scores more sensitive to individual responses.

At endline, several of these areas continued to show relatively high scores. Kurteop, for instance, recorded **9.67** in Autonomy, Freedom from Exploitation**,** and Mobility, while Bumthap recorded **9.60** in GESI Curriculum and Social Relations. Khengpa recorded particularly high scores in Shelter and Environment **(9.83**), Social Relations **(9.57),** Mobility **(9.54),** and Physical Health (9**.54)**. These results suggest that perceptions of Agency Freedom remained strong in areas where children could exercise choices concerning their personal environment, movement, relationships, participation, and physical well-being.

A notable change between baseline and endline concerns the relative prominence of wellbeing-related domains. At baseline, Mental Wellbeing was already identified as one of the comparatively weaker domains, with scores such as **7.83** for Khengpa and 7**.97** for the Non-category. At endline, however, Mental Wellbeing showed much greater variation across ethnic groups. The most pronounced endline score was **4.58** among Khengpa **students**, while Sharchop and Ngalop students also recorded comparatively lower scores of **6.94** and **7.48**, respectively. Since Agency Freedom concerns the ability to **choose to** manage feelings, decide when and with whom to share emotions, and find ways to remain positive when facing difficulties, these findings indicate that emotional and psychological aspects of choice remained an area requiring attention.

Nutritional Wellbeing also remained comparatively variable. At baseline, Bumtap recorded a relatively low score of **6.71**, while most other groups were above 8. At endline, nutritional scores were generally higher, ranging from 8.16 for Other to **8.96** for Lhotshampa, suggesting a more consistently positive pattern across the reported ethnic groups. Nevertheless, because nutritional choices may be influenced by factors such as the availability of food and the structured school environment, improvements in perceived agency in this area should not necessarily be interpreted as increased individual control alone.

The comparison also indicates that Participation, Religion and Identity, Freedom from Exploitation, and relational domains remained important areas of Agency Freedom at both measurement points. At baseline, these domains frequently recorded scores approaching or reaching 9.5–10.0 for several groups. At endline, high scores continued to be observed, including **9.37** for Kurteop in Participation**, 9.67** for Kurteop in Freedom from Exploitation**, 9.45** for Kurteop in Religion and Identity**,** and **9.60** for Bumthap in Social Relations. This continuity suggests that students continued to perceive opportunities to exercise choice and agency in participatory, social, and identity-related contexts.

Overall, the baseline–endline pattern suggests that Agency Freedom remained generally positive across ethnic groups, with continued strengths in participation, autonomy, social relations, mobility, protection from exploitation, and identity-related domains. At the same time, Mental Wellbeing emerged as a particularly important area of concern at endline, showing greater variation and substantially lower scores for some groups than were evident in other domains. Nutritional wellbeing also showed variation, although the endline scores were more consistently positive than the baseline pattern for some groups. These findings suggest that while children generally perceived considerable freedom to make choices in social, participatory, and everyday domains, emotional wellbeing and the capacity to exercise choice in relation to personal wellbeing may require greater attention in future interventions.

It is important to note that the available baseline information does not provide a complete score for every ethnic group across every Agency Freedom domain. Therefore, the comparison should be understood as a pattern-level comparison rather than a precise statistical baseline–endline change analysis. Differences in sample size across ethnic groups should also be considered when interpreting changes in group averages.

5.4.10 Agency Achievement (Baseline)

As reflected in Figure 18, the distribution of agency achievement scores across ethnic groups shows generally high levels across most domains, indicating that children from diverse backgrounds perceive themselves as able to translate opportunities into meaningful outcomes. Among the larger respondent groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) scores remain consistently strong across relational, educational, and institutional domains. For example, Education scores range from 9.27 to 9.39 across these groups, while Religion and Identity ranges from 9.31 to 9.50, suggesting relatively equitable achievement experiences among the major population groups.

In contrast, some smaller ethnic groups particularly Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya show very high scores in several domains, including Participation (up to 10.00), Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation (up to 10.00), Religion and Identity (10.00), and Aspiration (10.00). These elevated scores should be interpreted cautiously, as they may reflect the smaller sample sizes within these groups, where individual responses can disproportionately influence averages. Nevertheless, they also suggest that children in these communities perceive strong agency in areas related to identity, aspirations, and participation.

Across all ethnic groups, Mental Wellbeing remains comparatively lower (approximately 7.75–8.96), indicating a shared area of concern regardless of background. Similarly, Physical Health and Mobility show moderate variation, with some lower scores among certain groups (e.g., Mobility for the Non-categorized group at 7.54 and Khengpa at 8.42), suggesting uneven experiences in health and movement-related agency.

The Non-categorized group consistently records lower scores across multiple domains compared to identified ethnic groups, particularly in Participation (8.51), Mobility (7.54), and Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Curriculum (8.21), which may indicate weaker institutional or social engagement experiences.

Overall, the findings suggest that while agency achievement is generally high across ethnicities, variations exist in specific domains, with relational and identity-related achievements strongest and wellbeing-related outcomes comparatively weaker. Differences among smaller ethnic groups should be interpreted with consideration of sample size, while the relatively consistent scores among the larger groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) indicate broadly comparable achievement experiences across the major ethnic populations.

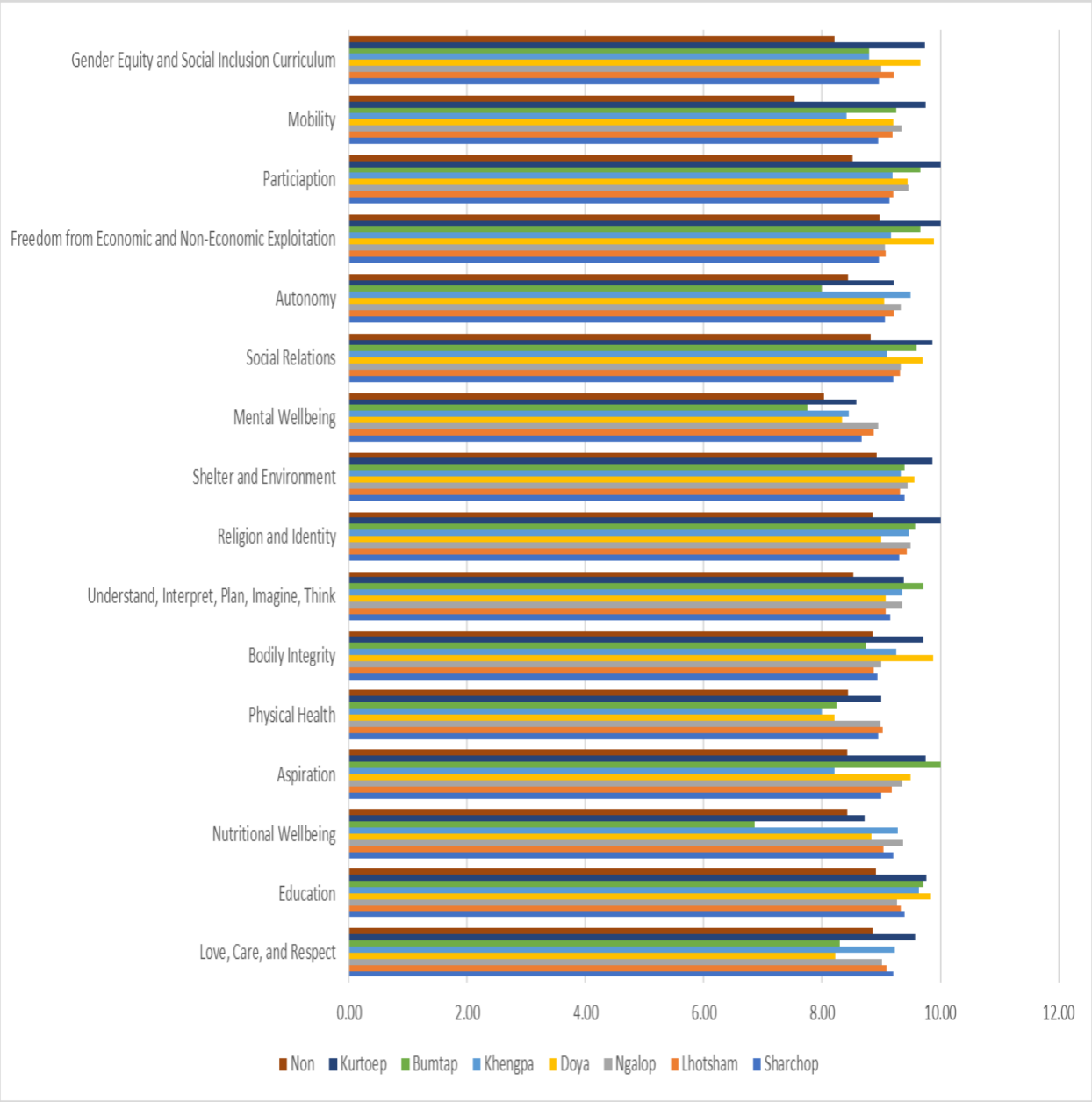

Figure 18: Agency Achievement by Ethnicity

5.4.11 Agency Achievement (Endline)

As indicated in Figure 19, the endline findings show generally positive levels of Agency Achievement across the ethnic groups, although the scores vary across capability domains. Agency Achievement reflects the extent to which children report that they "have chosen to…" exercise agency in different areas of their lives.

The highest score is observed among Kurteop children in Social Relation**s (9.77)**. This indicates a strong level of agency achievement in relation to their actual social choices and actions. The Social Relations items include having harmonious relationships within the community, cooperating with others, making friends, helping and supporting others, and giving support when needed. The high score therefore suggests that Kurteop children report having actively exercised choices that support positive relationships, cooperation, friendship, and mutual assistance.

Other relatively high scores are also evident among Kurteop children in Bodily Integrity **(9.67),** Freedom from Exploitation **(9.67),** Mental Well-being **(9.67),** Religion and Identity **(9.64),** Participation **(9.61),** and Education **(9.56)**. These scores indicate that their reported agency achievement extends beyond social relationships to choices and actions related to personal safety, protection from exploitation, emotional wellbeing, participation, education, and identity.

The lowest score is observed among Adibashi children in Nutritional Well-being **(7.69)**. This suggests comparatively lower levels of agency achievement in relation to actual choices and actions concerning nutrition. The relevant items include having sufficient meals, consuming protein-rich foods, eating vegetables and fruits, having enough food to satisfy hunger, having snacks, being able to take a second serving when needed, and having lunch before school. The relatively lower score may indicate that children have fewer opportunities to exercise or realise choices concerning these aspects of their nutritional wellbeing. Such choices may also be influenced by the availability of food and the conditions within the home and school environment.

The second-lowest score is found among Bumthap children in Nutritional Well-b**eing (7.76)**, followed by Autonomy among Other participants **(7.72)** and Autonomy among Khengpa children **(7.83)**. The lower Autonomy scores relate to actual choices concerning what children wear, how they spend their free time, activities related to personal development, how they use their time, activities they undertake without always requiring parental permission, and hobbies or interests they pursue independently. These findings suggest that opportunities for children to exercise independent choices may vary across ethnic groups.

Overall, the endline findings indicate that Agency Achievement is strongest in areas related to social relationships, personal safety, participation, education, and identity, particularly among the Kurteop group. In contrast, Nutritional Well-being and Autonomy show comparatively lower scores for some groups, suggesting that children's actual exercise of choice may be more constrained in areas that depend strongly on family resources, school arrangements, parental decisions, or access to food and other resources. Therefore, while the overall pattern is positive, the findings highlight the importance

of creating opportunities for children to exercise meaningful choices not only in social and participatory contexts but also in everyday personal wellbeing and independent decision-making.

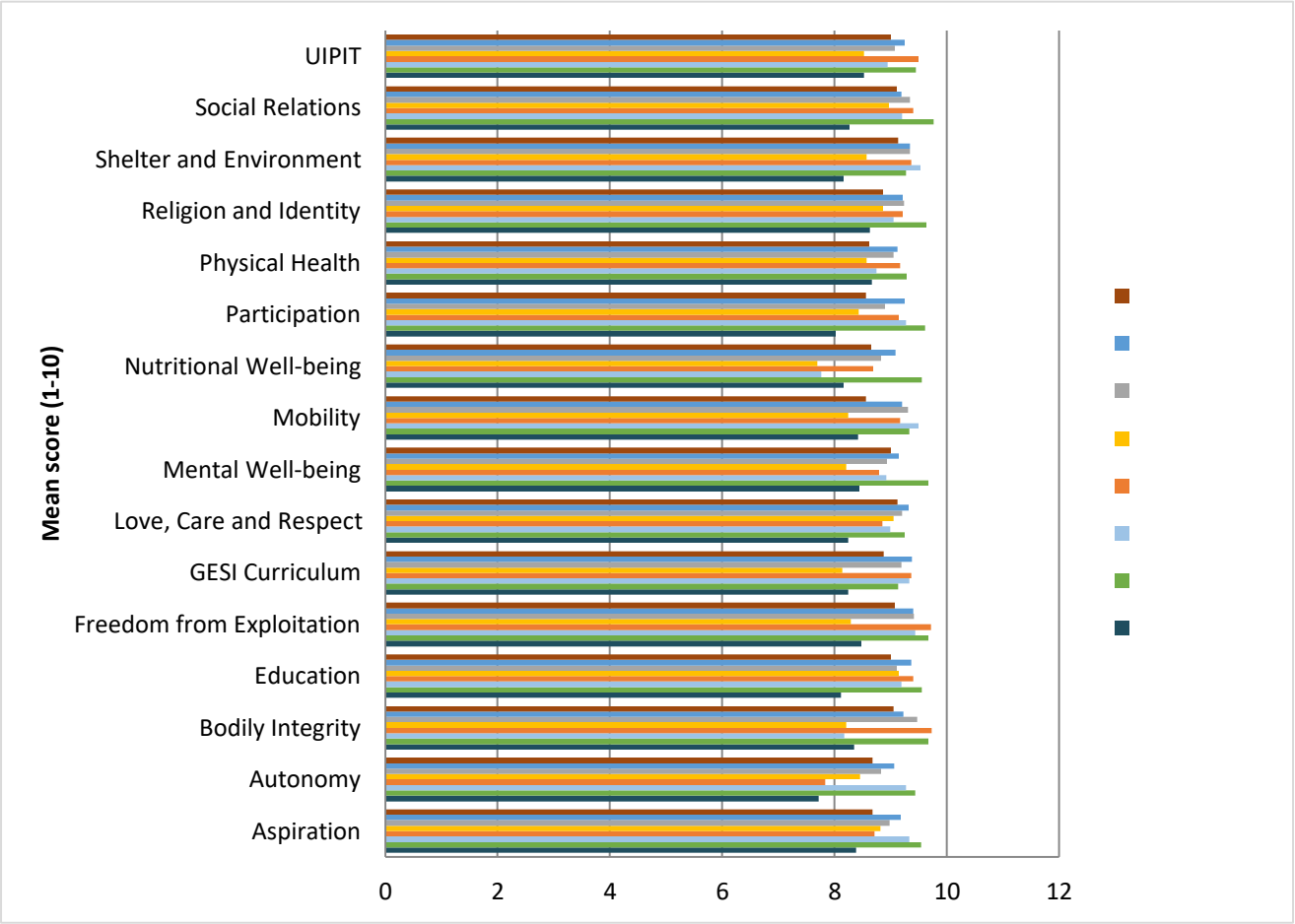

Figure 19: Agency Achievement by Ethnicity (Endline)

5.4.12 Agency Achievement: Baseline and Endline Comparison

The comparison of Agency Achievement between baseline and endline indicates that children continued to report generally positive levels of achievement across ethnic groups, although the pattern varied across capability domains. Agency Achievement refers to the extent to which children have actually exercised choices and translated opportunities into actions or outcomes in different areas of their lives.

At baseline, the larger ethnic groups (Lhotsham, Sharchop, and Ngalop) showed relatively consistent levels of Agency Achievement across education, relational, and identity-related domains. Education scores ranged from **9.27** to **9.39**, while Religion and Identity ranged from **9.31** to **9.50**. At endline, these groups continued to demonstrate relatively strong scores. Education was **9.37** for Lhotshampa**, 9.11** for Ngalop**,** and **9.01** for Sharchop, while Religion and Identity was **9.21, 9.24,** and **8.86**, respectively. Although some scores declined slightly from the baseline levels described in Figure 18, the endline results remained generally positive, suggesting that achievement in education and identity-related areas continued to be experienced across the major ethnic groups.

The smaller ethnic groups also continued to show high levels of Agency Achievement at endline. At baseline, Kurtoep, Khengpa, Bumtap, and Doya recorded particularly high scores in areas such as Participation, Freedom from Economic and Non-Economic Exploitation, Religion and Identity, and Aspiration, with some scores reaching **10.00**. At endline, Kurteop continued to record particularly high scores, including **9.77** in Social Relations**, 9.67** in Bodily Integrity and Freedom from Exploitation**, 9.67** in Mental Well-being**, 9.64** in Religion and Identity, and **9.61** in Participation. These results suggest that strong agency achievement among some of the smaller ethnic groups continued at endline, particularly in relational, participatory, protective, and identity-related domains. However, as at baseline, these results should be interpreted cautiously because smaller sample sizes can make group averages more sensitive to individual responses.

A notable area of concern at baseline was Mental Well-bei**ng**, which generally ranged from approximately **7.75** to **8.96** across ethnic groups. At endline, the pattern remained uneven rather than uniformly improving. Mental Well-being scores ranged from 8.21 among Adibashi to 9.67 among Kurteop, with relatively high scores for Kurteop, Lhotshampa (**9.15**), Sharchop (**9.00**), Bumthap (**8.92**), and Ngalop (**8.94**). This suggests that while mental wellbeing improved or remained relatively strong for some groups, differences across ethnic groups persisted at endline. Thus, mental wellbeing continues to warrant attention as an important dimension of Agency Achievement.

Mobility and Physical Health also showed variation at both measurement points. At baseline, Mobility was relatively lower for the Non-categorized group (**7.54**) and Khengpa (**8.42**). At endline, Mobility scores were generally higher across the identified ethnic groups, including **9.50** for Bumthap**, 9.33** for Kurteop**, 9.31** for Ngalop**, 9.20** for Lhotshampa**,** and 9**.17** for Khengpa. Physical Health also recorded relatively positive endline scores, with **9.29** for Kurteop**, 9.17** for Khengpa, and **9.12** for Lhotshampa. This pattern suggests an overall strengthening of actual achievements related to movement and physical health for several groups, although the baseline and endline categories are not fully identical.

Another important difference is observed in Nutritional Well-being. At endline, this domain recorded some of the comparatively lower scores, particularly **7.69** for Adibashi and **7.76** for Bumthap, while Lhotshampa recorded a higher score of **9.09** and Kurteop **9.55**. This indicates that actual achievements related to nutrition were not equally experienced across ethnic groups. The variation may reflect differences in children's access to adequate meals, protein, fruits and vegetables, snacks, and opportunities to satisfy their nutritional needs.

The Non-categorized/Other group also requires careful interpretation. At baseline, the Non-categorized group recorded relatively lower scores in areas such as Participation (**8.51**), Mobility (**7.54**), and GESI Curriculum (**8.21**). At endline, the corresponding Other group recorded **8.02** in Participation, **8.42** in Mobility, and **8.24** in GESI Curriculum. These figures suggest that comparatively lower scores persisted in some of these domains. However, because the category labels differ between baseline and endline, these values should not be treated as a precise longitudinal comparison without confirming that the groups represent the same participants.

Overall, the baseline–endline comparison suggests that Agency Achievement remained generally high across ethnic groups, particularly in areas related to social relationships, education, participation, protection from exploitation, and identity. The endline findings also show relatively strong achievements in Mobility and Physical Health for several groups. At the same time, Mental Well-being and Nutritional Well-being remain areas of greater variation, with some ethnic groups reporting substantially lower achievement than others.

The findings therefore indicate a broadly positive pattern of Agency Achievement at endline, while also showing that improvements or high achievement were not uniform across all capability domains or ethnic groups. The consistently high scores among several groups suggest continued opportunities for children to translate agency into actual choices and actions, while the comparatively lower scores in nutrition, mental wellbeing, and some autonomy-related areas highlight domains where further support may be beneficial. Differences should, however, be interpreted with caution because of variations in ethnic-group sample sizes and the mismatch between some baseline and endline category labels.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the scores for Bhutanese school children's valuation of CVEC to scale GESI range from **7.2 to 9.2**, indicating generally high levels of perceived well-being and agency at both baseline and endline. The baseline and endline comparisons show positive changes across several capability domains for both male and female children, particularly in mental well-being, autonomy, aspiration, physical health, mobility, GESI curriculum, and UIPIT**.**

These improvements suggest that the LIKE Club intervention provided children with opportunities to participate, express themselves, build relationships, make choices, and develop confidence and aspirations**.** However, declines in areas such as mental well-being freedom among males, nutritional well-being, and religion and identity indicate that some aspects of children's well-being and agency remain influenced by broader structural and contextual factors. Overall, the findings demonstrate generally strong levels of well-being and agency, while highlighting the need for continued support for children's emotional well-being, participation, and opportunities to exercise meaningful choices within the school environment.

Gender differences are relatively small, indicating generally high and broadly comparable levels of well-being and agency among boys and girls across both freedom and achievement dimensions. Positive changes were observed in several domains, particularly female mental well-being, autonomy, mobility, and GESI curriculum, and male aspiration, physical health, UIPIT, and mental well-being achievement**.** However, variations in areas such as mental well-being, nutritional well-being, religion and identity, and mobility indicate that children's experiences of freedom and achievement differ across specific domains. These findings highlight the importance of continued attention to emotional well-being, meaningful participation, autonomy, and opportunities for children to exercise choices within the constraints of the school environment**.**

Across grades, well-being and agency remained generally high from baseline to endline, although the pattern of change varied across Primary, Lower Secondary, and Middle Secondary students. Primary

students showed stronger improvements in areas such as aspiration, autonomy, GESI curriculum, physical health, UIPIT, and mobility, while Middle Secondary students recorded notable gains in aspiration, mental well-being, bodily integrity, and UIPIT. In contrast, some declines were evident among Lower Secondary and Middle Secondary students, particularly in mental well-being, participation, autonomy, religion and identity, and nutritional well-being**.** These findings suggest that while children across grades experienced generally strong well-being and agency, older students, particularly those in Middle Secondary, may require greater support to sustain emotional well-being, meaningful participation, autonomy, and the ability to exercise choices as they progress through adolescence**.**

For ethnicity, the three larger respondent groups (Lhotshampa, Sharchop, and Ngalop) show relatively consistent and generally high levels of well-being and agency across most domains, indicating broadly positive experiences. Some smaller ethnic groups, particularly Kurteop, Bumthap, and Khengpa, demonstrate notable strengths and substantial changes in specific domains, such as nutrition, mobility, mental well-being, and shelter and environment; however, these findings should be interpreted cautiously because smaller sample sizes may result in greater variation in group averages. The Non-categorized/Other group reports comparatively lower scores in some areas, including participation, mobility, and GESI curriculum, although differences in category labels between baseline and endline limit direct comparison. Overall, the findings indicate domain-specific variations across ethnic groups rather than a uniform pattern of change.

Across demographic categories, children generally report high levels of well-being and agency, although variations are evident across specific capability domains and groups. Mental well-being, nutritional well-being, participation, autonomy, and mobility show greater variation in some groups and across grades, highlighting areas where continued support may be beneficial. In contrast, education, social relations, bodily integrity, freedom from exploitation, and identity-related domains generally remain strong across many groups.

In summary, while children demonstrate broadly positive well-being and agency across gender, grade, and ethnicity, the pattern of freedoms and achievements varies according to age, context, and capability domain. The findings point to continued strengths in relational, educational, protective, and identity-related areas, while variations in mental well-being, participation, autonomy, nutrition, and mobility indicate areas requiring sustained attention to support children’s ability to exercise choices and translate opportunities into meaningful outcomes.

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