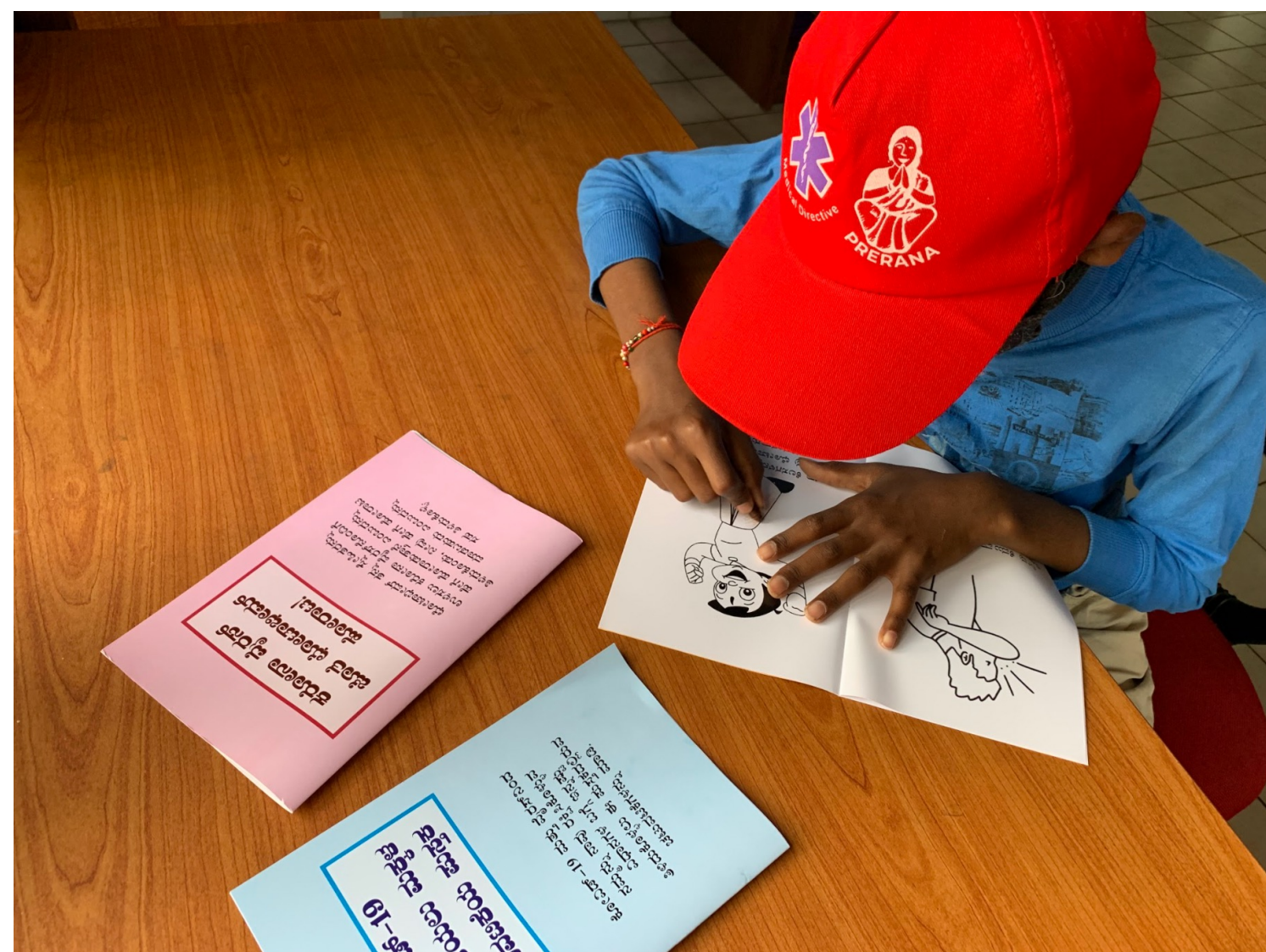


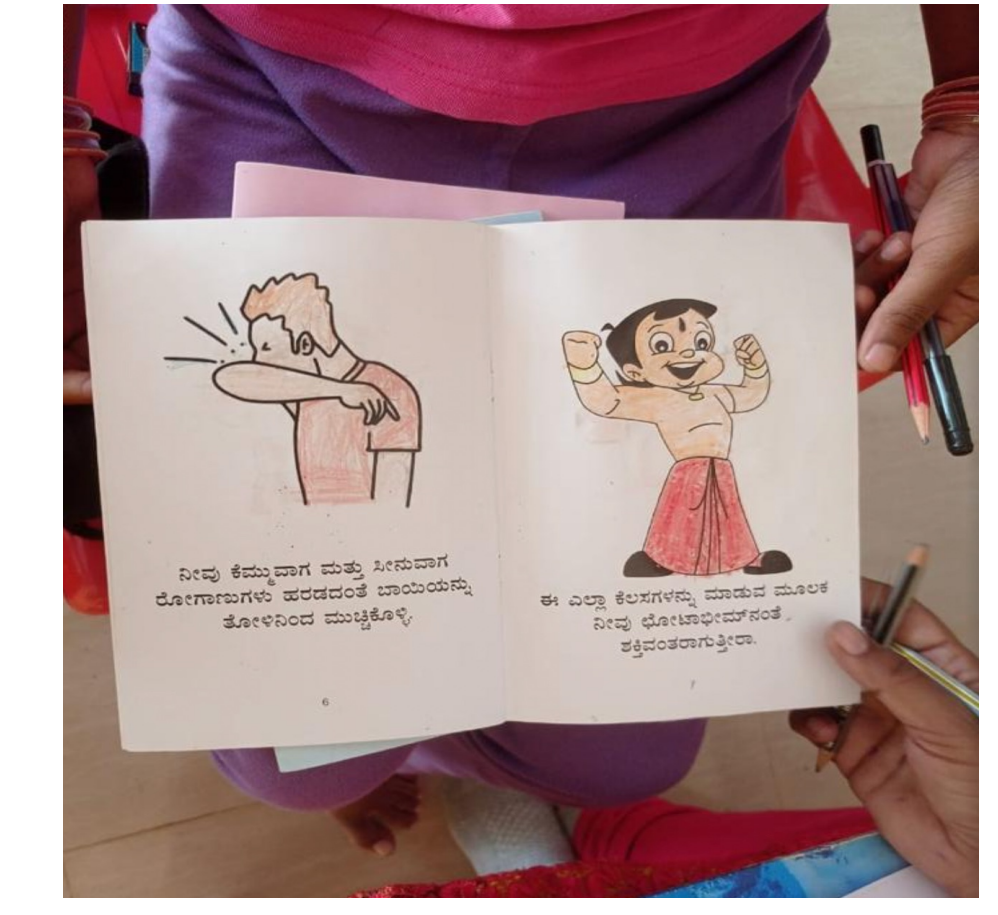
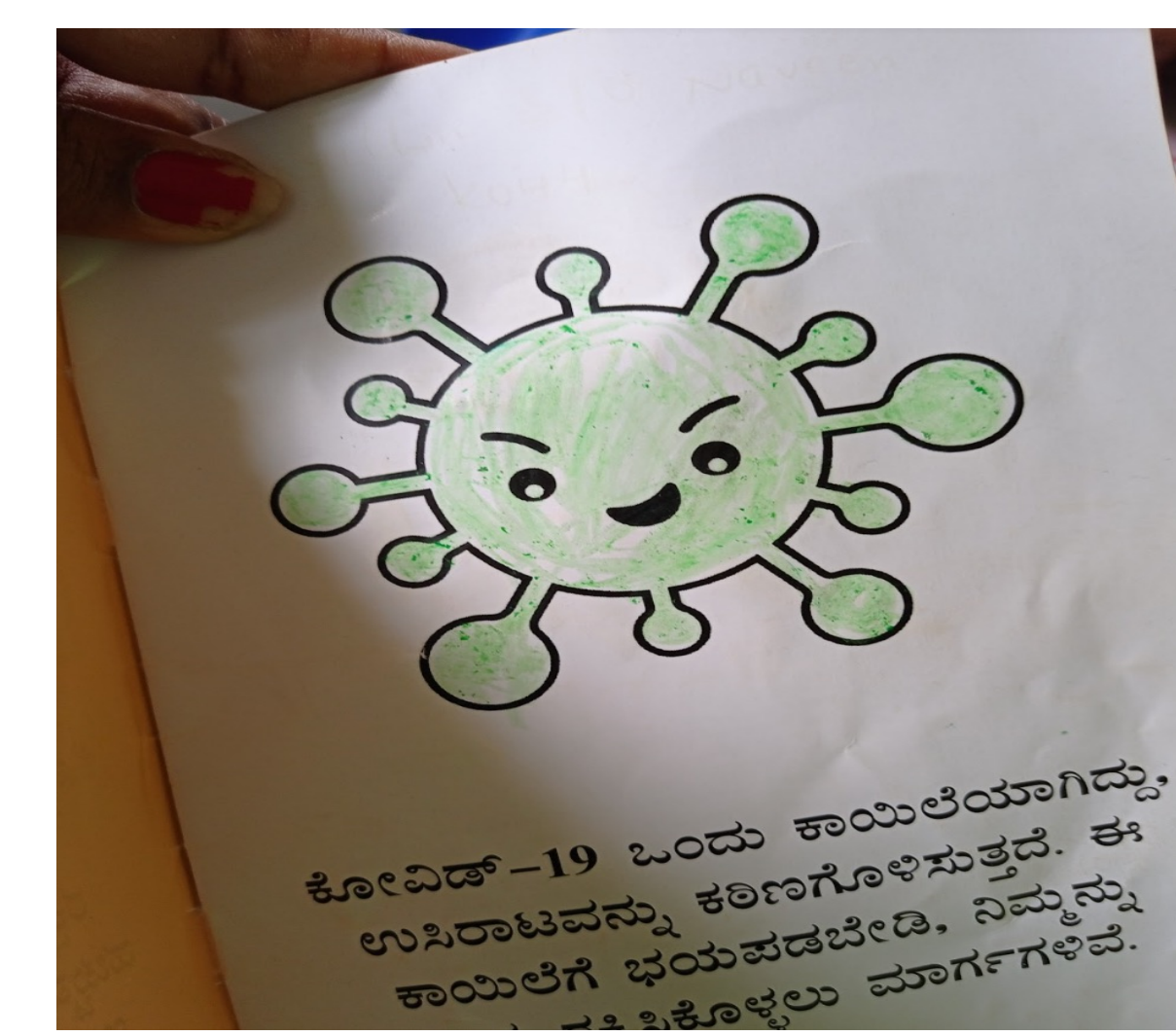
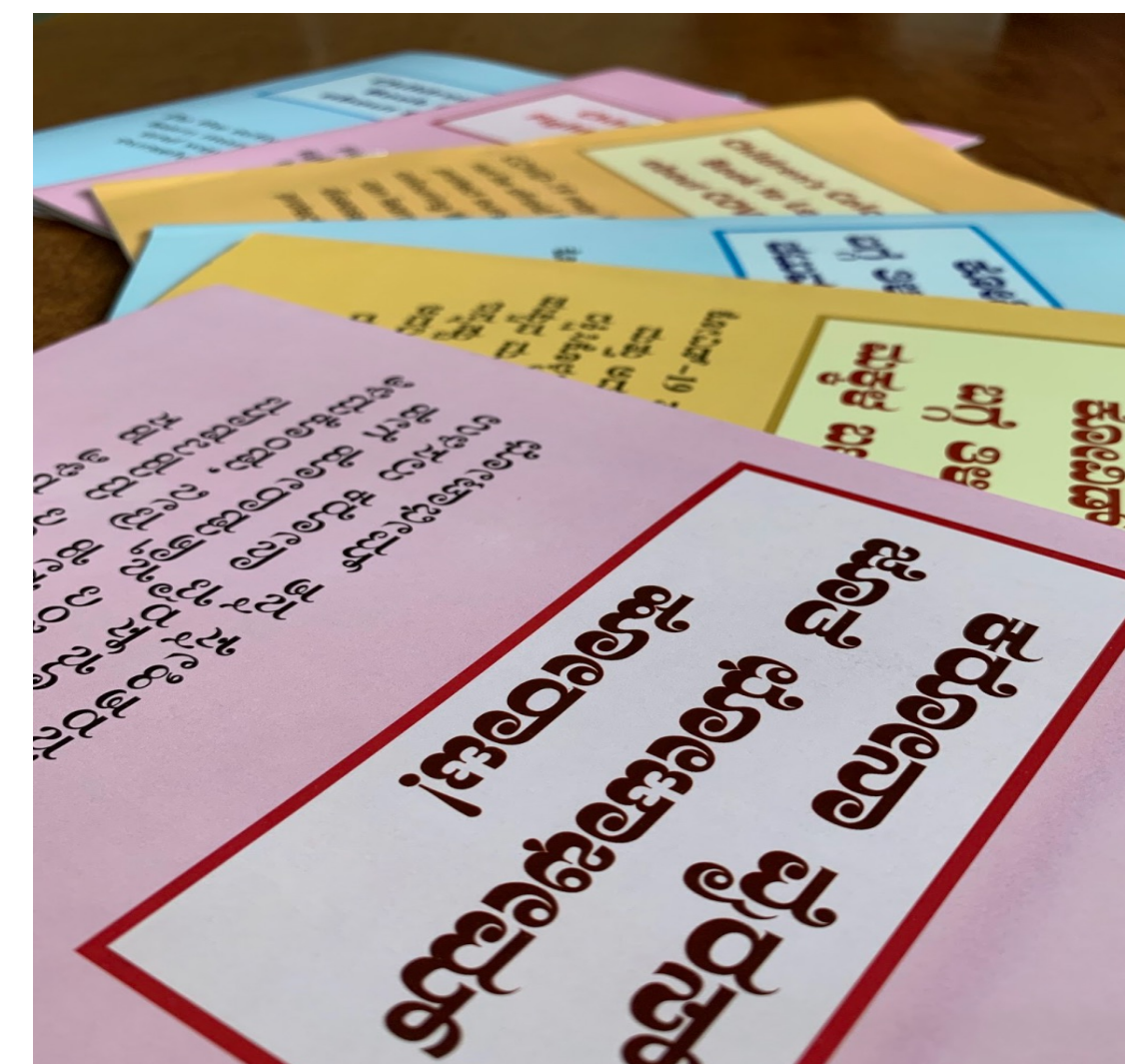
Introduction

- Many children from underserved communities in India stopped their education¹ as parents lost their jobs and could not afford to pay school fees,
- Children lacked resources for virtual learning,
- Children from underserved communities in India were not properly sensitized about COVID-19
- Intervention that engages youth in a fun and entertaining manner about COVID-19 were found to be effective².



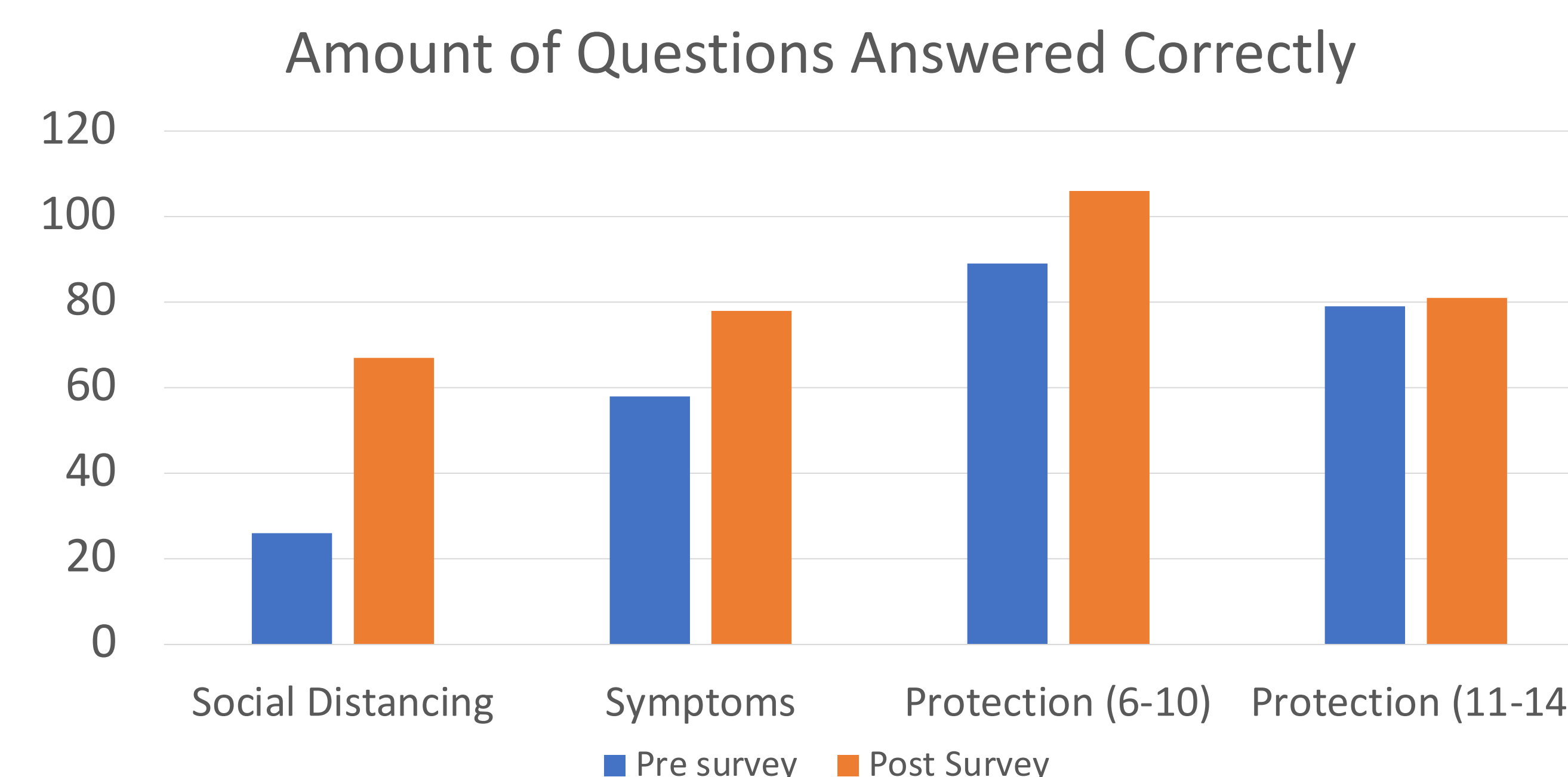
Methods

- Age-appropriate comics, activity and coloring books were created for two age groups for 6-10 years (n=116) and 11-14 years (n=81)
- Incorporated popular cartoon characters
- Consulted with teachers to ensure readability
- Translated into the local language of *Kannada*
- Community Health Workers distributed books for 6 months along with crayons
- Phone calls to instruct and encourage parents and social workers to help their children complete the books were made
- Brief surveys were administered to children before and after distribution of material to assess changes in their knowledge.



Results

- There was an increase in number of questions answered correctly after reading the books
 - 16.9% (Ages between 6-10)
 - 4.5% (Ages between 11-14)
- The question for ages 6-10 about maintaining social distancing had an increase of correct answers by 35.4% (p<0.0001)
- Other topics that had a significant increase in the number of correct responses were:
 - Prevention of COVID-19 (p<0.01 in 6-10)
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 (p<0.01 in 6-10)
 - Ways to protect oneself from getting infected (p<0.0001 in both age groups).



Discussion

- Easy method to engage children in underserved communities between the ages of 6-14 in health education.
- Some of the challenges we have overcome is simplifying the language of the books to ensure that the children and parents from communities with lower literacy rates are able to read and learn from the books.
- This low-cost program could be used anywhere in the world to disseminate information and educate children about health awareness.

References

1. Alvi, M., & Gupta, M. (2020). Learning in times of lockdown: how Covid-19 is affecting education and food security in India. *Food security*, 12(4), 793-796.
2. Kabapinar, F. (2005). Effectiveness of Teaching via Concept Cartoons from the Point of View of Constructivist

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge Medical Directive, the Public Health Research Institute of India, and the community health workers for helping prepare and distribute the material.