

Supplementary file:

To achieve a high level of rigor in the study, we used Lincoln and Guba’s set of criteria encompassing credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Table: Lincoln and Guba’s criteria of trustworthiness and strategies followed in the study

Criteria	Strategies	Details of the strategies followed in the study
Credibility	Prolonged engagement	-Data collection process spanned over nine months, allowing us to immerse ourselves deeply in the research context. It facilitated the establishment of trust and rapport with participants and helped us adopt an iterative data collection approach and improve credibility of our study findings.
	Persistent observation	-Observation notes prepared during our field visits offered a better contextual understanding, vital for accurately interpreting participant responses.
	Peer debriefing	-Regular debriefing among research and field team members played a vital role in enhancing the credibility of our study by offering a critical perspective on the research process and by fostering continuous dialogue and reflection.
Dependability	Use of in-depth interviews and observation as methods of data collection	-The use of in-depth interviews (IDIs) and observation as data collection methods helped us validate our findings and enhance the dependability of our study findings.
	Rich description	-Insights gathered through these methods, along with ongoing interactions with field teams, provided a deeper understanding of the study setting and enabled us to effectively describe its context in order to improve the dependability of the study findings.
Confirmability	Triangulation	-Triangulation of data gathered from IDIs and observation helped us cross-validate the findings and mitigate the influence of researcher bias, enhancing the confirmability of our findings.

	Reflexivity	<p>-Throughout the data collection and analysis process, we engaged in reflective practice, regularly assessing our own biases and preconceptions. This reflexivity helped ensure that our interpretations remained grounded in the participants' experiences rather than being influenced by our own assumptions. The core research team held weekly debriefing sessions to discuss each interview. During these sessions, we discussed interview experiences as well as the broader field level experiences. Additionally, we examined the observation notes recorded during and after the interviews, ensuring a comprehensive reflection on the entire data collection process.</p>
Transferability	<p>Sampling technique</p> <p>Thick description</p>	<p>-To strengthen the transferability criteria, we documented detailed information on sampling, participant recruitment, and the challenges faced during the process.</p> <p>-Insights gathered using IDIs and observation methods, along with regular interactions with field teams, provided a deeper understanding of the study setting and enabled us to gather bulk of data to effectively describe the context.</p>