

# Kaushalya Vardhan Kendra (KVK)

## *Pioneering a flexible approach of skill development in rural Gujarat*

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### Case Summary

*The case study for Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras (KVKs) documents the development and implementation of a unique skill development program in Gujarat, targeted towards the rural population. The KVK program adopts a decentralized, cluster based approach for skill development that is responsive to local culture, traditional skills and industry needs. It also offers flexibility in eligibility criteria, course curriculum and timing, making it more accommodating for women and other disadvantaged groups such as school dropouts, minorities and members of lower income households. Ms. Sonal Mishra IAS, Commissioner, Employment and Training (CET), Government of Gujarat, has championed the advancement of vocational education in the state, and has played a pioneering role in the implementation and scaling-up of the KVK program.*

*Though the program is relatively new, it has already received significant attention and several accolades. The program received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration in 2012, for its innovative approach and successful implementation. It has also been widely appreciated by the Planning Commission; Ministry of Labour, Government of India; State Governments and other bodies including the Confederation of Indian Industry, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). The Planning Commission of Government of India is considering adopting the KVK model to design PPP architecture for 5000 new skill development centers (SDCs) to be established all across the country.*

## Context

Rapid growth of population in India is coupled with a unique demographic transition. Because of declining birth rates and improved life expectancy, India will witness a continuous rise in the working age population (in the 15–64 age bracket) over the next decade. Until 2020, the growth rate of working age population in India will exceed that of the total population<sup>1</sup>. This unique, 20 to 25 years' window of opportunity termed as the 'demographic dividend' forms the basis of skill development policy in India. The 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan by Government of India emphasizes on the importance of vocational training and skill development in order to reap the full potential of the demographic dividend and build a skilled workforce in the near future. The National Skill Development Policy (NSDP), 2009 envisions empowering all individuals through improved skills, knowledge, and nationally and internationally recognized qualifications to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's presence in the global competitive market.

The Government of India has set a target to skill 500 million people by 2022, and to increase the percentage of workforce with formal skills from 10% to 25% through provision of vocational training and other short term skill development programs. Formal vocational training in India is primarily imparted through Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Other ministries such as the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Urban Development and Ministry of Housing & Poverty Alleviation also implement skill upgrading programs and self-employment schemes. However, most of these skill programs and schemes are concentrated in cities, towns and urban agglomerations. Opportunities for vocational skill training in rural areas are particularly scarce. According to the summary report on skill development prepared by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and presented at the global skill summit in 2013:

*"People in urban areas have a 93% higher chance at vocational training than those in rural areas. Furthermore, a person with a high school degree has a 300% higher chance at getting trained than an illiterate person."<sup>2</sup>*

India is still predominantly rural with close to 70% population residing in villages and engaged in the agricultural sector. As per the figures of the Census 2011, the level of literacy in rural India stands at 67.7% as compared to the national average of 73%. Women in rural areas are particularly disadvantaged; bound by social norms and customs and have limited time and money to spend on education and skill enhancement. The level of literacy among rural women is lower at 58%. The NSDP recognizes this urban-rural imbalance in training opportunities and also the particularly low participation of women in vocational training programs. The policy calls for proactive measures to impart skills to rural workers in areas that contribute to improved agricultural productivity and also enable them to access emerging employment opportunities beyond the agricultural sector. To meet the challenge of training 500 million people in the next decade, it is imperative to extend vocational training and skill development opportunities to women, rural youth and other disadvantaged groups who are currently neglected and left out. Skill building can be an instrument to empower these individuals and improve their employability as well as social acceptance.

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<sup>1</sup>IIPS. *Population Projection and its Socio-Economic Implications in India: A State Level Projection Till 2020.*, 2012

<sup>2</sup>FICCI. *Reaping India's promised demographic dividend — industry in driving seat.*, 2013

## Skill training scenario in Gujarat

The growth of engineering, agro & food processing, chemicals, automobile and other industrial sectors offers numerous employment opportunities in Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat established the Commissionerate of Employment and Training (CET) to facilitate vocational training and other skill development programs, which are responsive to the industry needs. CET has set a target of imparting skill training to 5.4 million youth by 2017<sup>3</sup>. To strengthen the vocational training sector, the Government of Gujarat has embarked upon several initiatives including revamping existing ITIs, establishing new ITIs, setting up of Superior Technology Centers (STC), and introducing special training programs in emerging sectors like Information Technology (IT).

There are 263 ITIs in the state covering all 26 districts and 225 talukas. To make the ITIs more attractive for youth, the Government of Gujarat has embarked upon a major initiative to upgrade them with modern technology, high-tech classrooms and state-of-art labs and workshops. The course structure and curriculum at the institutes has also been modified to make it more relevant to industry needs. The Government of Gujarat has also recognized a two year ITI course after 8<sup>th</sup> standard equivalent to a 10<sup>th</sup> standard certification. Similarly, a two year ITI course after 10<sup>th</sup> standard is recognized as equivalent to 12<sup>th</sup> standard certification. These systemic changes will allow ITI graduates to enter the formal education stream, and will also significantly enhance the acceptability of vocational training programs.

With all these initiatives, Gujarat has already made huge strides in the skill development sector. Increasing the enrollment of women in vocational training programs, however still needs a major policy boost. The FICCI Skill Report published in 2012 states that<sup>4</sup>:

- 3.6% of women in rural India have received/receiving some sort of vocational training as compared to 8% of men.
- 6.5% of women in urban India have received/receiving some sort of vocational training as compared to 14.4% of men.

Enrollment of women in ITIs can be attributed to a combination of geographical as well as socio-cultural factors. Availability of safe and reliable public transport services from villages to the ITIs is also limited. Hence, many families hesitate to send women to these training institutes. Moreover, the ITIs offer courses that have a minimum duration of one year, which require women to be away from their home and families for longer periods of time. The timings, schedule and curriculum of the courses is also fixed. The relatively lower literacy levels among women also deter them from enrolling in vocational courses at ITI, as they do not match the minimum eligibility criterion of having completed 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

Recognizing the low enrollment of women and rural youth in ITIs, Government of Gujarat decided to adopt a flexible approach to strengthen the skill development sector, making it more accessible for women and rural youth, keeping in mind their aspirations, needs and problems.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.gidb.org/downloads/ms\\_sonal\\_mishra\\_gidb\\_seminar\\_sir\\_08082012.pdf](http://www.gidb.org/downloads/ms_sonal_mishra_gidb_seminar_sir_08082012.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>FICCI. *Reaping India's promised demographic dividend — industry in driving seat.*, 2013.

## Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras

### Inception

The Kaushalya VardhanKendra (KVK) program was conceived during the Chintan Shibir held in Kutch in 2009. Chintan Shibirs are periodic meetings of the Government of Gujarat officials and ministers to strategize future activities and programs.

The ideology of the new program was to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, especially, among rural youth and women, to create a pool of skilled personnel as per the demands of industries and local needs. The following strategies were laid out to ensure maximum participation of women and other disadvantaged groups such as school dropouts, minorities and lower income families:

- Provide skill training within the geographic reach of rural population by adopting a decentralized, cluster based model.
- Adopt a participatory approach to program design and provide 'need-based' training that is responsive to local culture, traditional skills and industry needs.
- Make skill training more accommodating for women by offering short term courses and allowing flexible timings.
- Relax minimum qualifications and age restriction criteria for admission to attract a wider population.
- Keep skill training affordable.
- Ensure acceptability of the offered courses by providing formal certification by Gujarat Council of Vocational Training (GCVT)
- Make vocational training desirable and attractive by providing high quality infrastructure and facilities at the village level skill development centers.

Based on the above strategies, the '**WISH**' concept was devised for Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras focusing on **W**omen oriented courses, **I**ndustry oriented courses, **S**oft skills and **S**ervice sector related courses and **H**ard-core traditional courses. It was decided to start 150KVK centers on a pilot basis with a population greater than 10,000 (7,000 in tribal areas). Villages with no vocational training facilities at close proximity were prioritized. (Refer Exhibit 1). A budget of Rs. 83.96 Crores was earmarked for the initiative for the first year in 2010-11. (See Exhibit 2)

### Institutional arrangements

The KVK program was designed to utilize existing institutional arrangements and government infrastructure, and build upon the robust network of ITIs in the state. The Commissioner, CET designed the modalities and rollout plan for the program and an Assistant Director, was given charge for the implementation of the program in the state. The Principal of the district level ITI was designated as the Skill Development Officer (SDO) responsible for executing all the Skill programs in the district (Including KVK program). A new position of a KVK Coordinator was instituted to head the KVK initiative. The SDO and the KVK coordinator identified available government buildings such as schools, panchayat structures or other buildings available on rent to start the KVK centers. The buildings were upgraded with essential infrastructure and equipment according to the guidelines provided by CET. A surrounding area of 5-7 km comprising 6-7 villages was identified as the catchment area for the KVK.

To encourage participation from local leaders, Kaushalya Vardhan Samitis were constituted under the chairmanship of the SDO. Members of the samiti including gram panchayat members, industrial associations, and principal of the primary / high school, representative of rural labour office, village computer entrepreneur (VCE), multipurpose health workers, and village elders were involved in

program design and implementation. The KVK coordinator was designated as the member secretary of the committee.(See Exhibit2).



#### *Institutional arrangements for KVK*

The role of the samitis was to provide inputs in course design, organizing Kaushalya Sabhas, mobilizing the village community to join KVKs, running awareness campaigns, providing linkages with industry and encouraging employment and self-employment.

### **Participatory approach to program design**

It was decided that at least four short term courses (2 to 3months) would be introduced at each KVK based on local needs, skill levels and aspirations based on the 'WISH' concept. The course structure and curriculum was adapted from the courses being offered at the MES-NCVT. The SDO and the KVK coordinator with support from Kaushalya Vardhan Samiti members organized Kaushalya Sabhas in all villages within the catchment area. In the Kaushalya Sabhas, KVK coordinators interacted with potential training seekers and interested groups to decide type of courses, time schedules, and infrastructure requirements for the KVK. Once the courses were identified, outsourced manpower including faculties from registered manpower agency were deputed at the KVKs.



*Kaushalya Sabha in progress at Manipur village in the Godhavi cluster*

The courses that were most popular and hence were introduced in most of the KVKs, included computer fundamentals, tally software, basic welding, electric wiring, beauty and make-up, hair dressing, tailoring and garment stitching, domestic appliance repairing, mobile repairing, plumbing, and motor driving.

Courses like fiber boat making, fish handling & preservation and making fishing crafts & gear found huge demand in coastal villages and towns while courses in spoken English, gem and jewelry designing etc. were most popular in the vicinity of large cities.

### Awareness campaigning and social mobilization

Massive awareness campaigns were launched to advertise the program and the SDOs, KVK coordinators and samiti members informed the youth and women about the concept of KVK and the variety of courses offered. A host of meetings were held at local schools, panchayats, street plays and folk theater were staged; and signage and information boards were installed at KVK villages and important crossroads of the village/town.



Awareness campaigning for KVKs

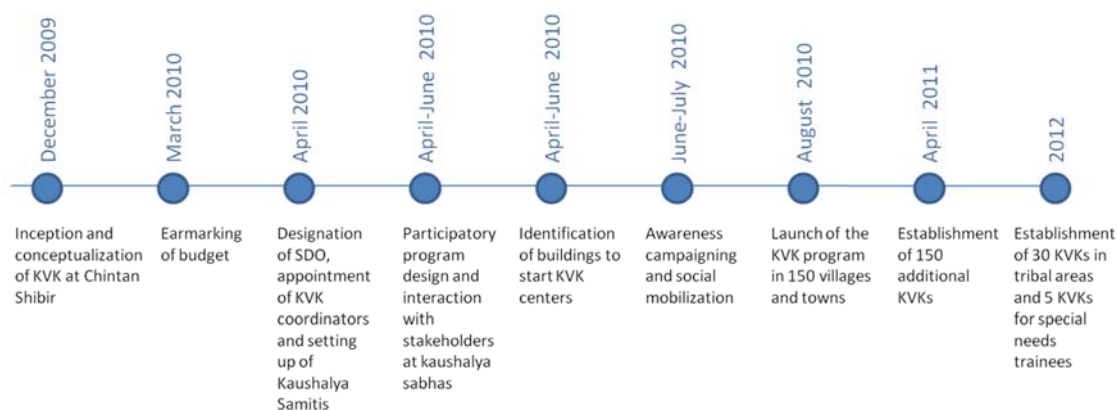
In order to reach out to women, the KVK coordinator and teachers visited households, especially in villages and communities where social acceptability of women joining the workforce was observed to be low. The KVK coordinator informed women and their families on the advantages of vocational education, explaining how learning new income-generating skills and activities could lead to improving their own and the families’ economic status. They highlighted the flexible course timings, schedules and curriculum, which would allow women to participate in the training without disrupting their household responsibilities.



The KVK coordinator and faculty actively campaigned to enroll women in the training courses

## Launch and current status

After six months of preparatory work including setting up of infrastructure and implementation framework, active campaigning and social mobilization, KVK was launched as a flagship scheme of the Commissionerate of Employment and Training on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2010. Building up on the success of the program, additional 150 KVKs were launched in 2011, and another 35 in 2012 under the leadership and able guidance of Ms. Sonal Mishra IAS, Commissioner, Employment and Training, Gujarat. As of January 2014, there are 335 KVKs that are functional in Gujarat. 120 of these are located in predominantly tribal areas.



### Implementation timeline for KVK

## Current modalities of KVK

After the success of the KVK program in suburban towns and larger villages, the criterion for identification of new centers has been revised to include villages with population greater than 7,000 (4,900 for tribal dominated areas) to target more remote villages in the state.

483 short-term courses, with a duration varying from 40 to 576 hours are currently running in KVKs all across Gujarat. The trainees receive a formal certificate from Gujarat Council of Vocational Training on course completion. In addition, 1980 essential life skill courses

such as pesticide spraying, making household items, playing musical instruments etc. have also been identified so far.

Each KVK runs a minimum of four courses with a batch size of 16-20 participants per course. There is no upper age limit for admission and the minimum eligibility criteria vary from course to course. Admission is offered on producing a school leaving certificate. Those who cannot produce a certificate are admitted on the basis of an oral test. The courses at KVK are free for Women, SC/ ST, physically handicapped and trainees below poverty line. Nominal



*KVKs offer formal vocational training as well as courses in essential life skills*

fees of Rs. 50/- has been kept for General candidates.

Flexible admission criteria allow people from different segments of the population including youth, young girls, housewives and even senior citizens to enroll for various courses. KVK offers its students, opportunities to interact and socialize and learn from each other's experiences.

The trainees receive career counseling from time to time and are encouraged to participate in employment seminars and job fairs at the nearby ITIs. The KVK staff also establishes key linkages with industries, companies and job providers in the proximity of KVK and helps the trainees acquire jobs.

No new physical infrastructure has been established under the KVK program. All 335 centers are currently running in schools, gram panchayat buildings, APMC buildings, local colleges, or private buildings which have been acquired on rent. The KVKs are equipped with all essential infrastructure including drinking water, sanitary facilities, benches and whiteboards in classrooms, computers and other machines and equipment as per the requirement of the courses. All KVKs are equipped with DTH connection for learning through Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG). Regular broadcast of specialized lectures through SAT-COM for trainees and villagers have also been undertaken. An annual budget of Rs. 20-25 lakhs for non-recurring expenses and Rs. 16 lakhs for recurring expenses is allocated per KVK.

In areas where the KVK center attains a saturation point and all interested participants are trained, it has been decided to introduce extension centers attached to that KVK or even shift the KVK altogether to a different town/ village where there is demand.



*All KVKs are run in government or rented buildings that are upgraded and equipped with all essential infrastructure*

The hiring of faculty and trainers has been formalized and outsourced to a private human resource provider agency. The agency was selected through due e-tendering process and provides all the required staff at KVK including trainers, one multi-skilled assistant, security personnel and one housekeeper at each KVK.



## Monitoring Mechanism

A robust monitoring system is critical for the long-term success of any program and to identify mid-term corrective measures, if required. For purposes of centralized monitoring by CET, the National Information Centre (NIC) has developed an online portal. The coordinator at each KVK updates information regarding enrollments in each course by category (women/ SC/ ST/ BPL/ PH) on the portal. The information can be accessed online using a password entry. Summary reports collated for each KVK, district and region can also be generated and printed from the portal.

A field monitoring regime has also been established for the program. Regular meetings are held at the CET head office in Gandhinagar, where all KVK coordinators present the progress and key highlights of their center. Principals and faculties of ITIs are required to conduct regular inspection of all KVK centers. The active involvement of Kaushalya Samitis, in the functioning of KVKs, has also ensured proper infrastructure and quality of training.



The screenshot displays the KVK-Kaushalya Vardhan Kendra online portal. The header includes the Government of Gujarat logo and the text 'KVK-Kaushalya Vardhan Kendra, Commissionerate of Employment and Training, Government of Gujarat'. A 'Logout' button is visible. The main content area shows a table for the 'Region NAME : Ahmedabad'. The table has five columns: 'Sl.No.', 'KVK Name', 'Registered', 'Course Defined', and 'Batch Defined'. The table lists 15 KVKs with their respective registered candidate counts, course definitions, and batch definitions.

Sl.No.	KVK Name	Registered	Course Defined	Batch Defined
1	Dabhala	2920	31	138
2	Ghatodiya (P.H)	88	3	9
3	Kamboi (Samou)	1850	6	52
4	Kherva	3398	10	144
5	Ladol	4199	13	202
6	Pethapur	2080	10	97
7	Randheja (Rupal)	3736	16	113
8	Unvavad	1994	22	128
9	Vastrapur (P.H)	350	14	34
10	બાંધણી-KVK	2350	41	146
11	બોલિ-KVK	2274	26	107
12	બેલ-KVK	3630	34	127
13	કોલિ-KVK	2084	34	105
14	જાંજી-KVK	3411	26	122
15	ગાંધી-KVK	2023	24	107

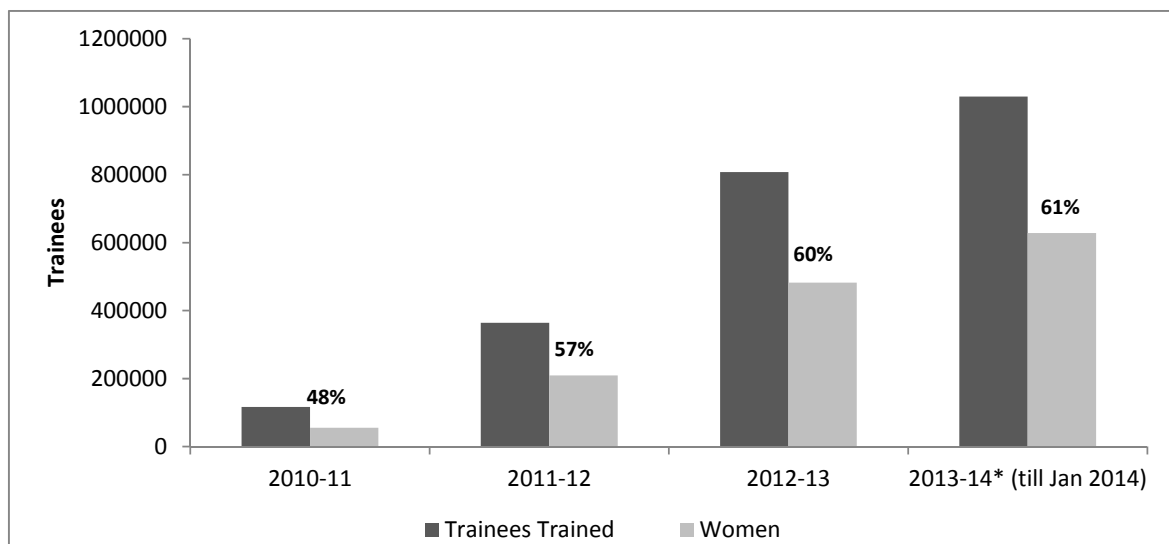
*The KVK online portal helps track the progress of program*

## Outcome and Impact of the KVK program

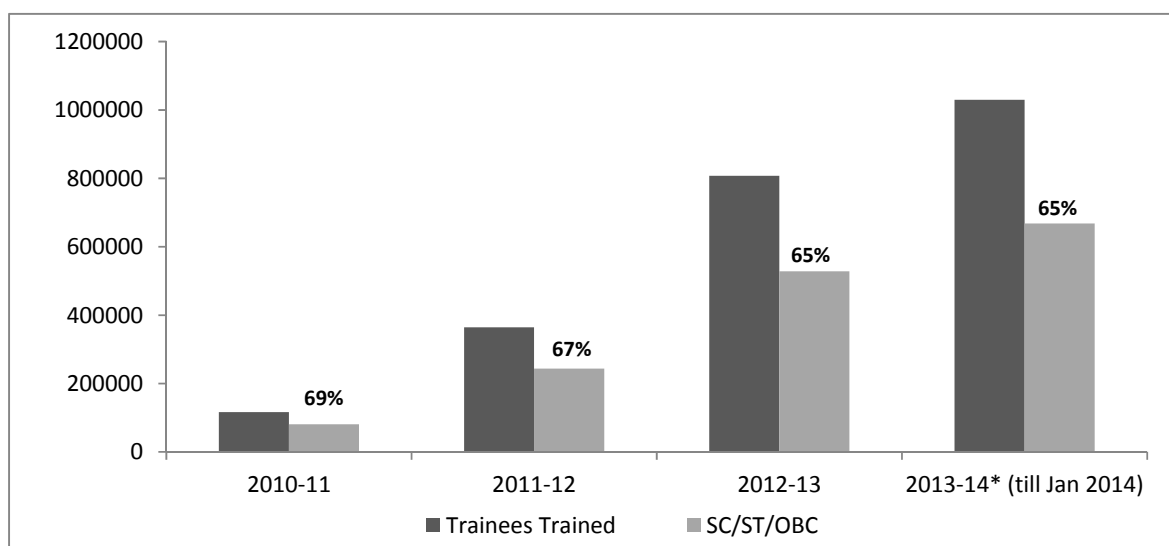
The program has achieved a widespread reach in Gujarat. Percentage of Women participants increased from 47% (2010-11) to 61% (Up to January-2014) in 2013-14. KVK program has successfully broken the social and caste barriers in education. 63% of the trainees are from SC/ST/OBC backgrounds.

Apart from these numbers, the case studies in the end highlight the impact that the program has had on the lives of individuals. It has not only instilled confidence and pride, but has provided opportunities for economic independence and growth for the trainees. The KVK is also seen as a platform for people from different walks of life, economic strata, age groups, to come together to interact and co-learn.

### Year wise enrollment in KVK program



*Enrollment of women in the KVK program has consistently increased*



*Enrollment of SC/ST/OBC in the KVK program has remained constant*

### Learnings

The key learnings from the KVK initiative which has pioneered a flexible approach to skill development making it more accessible for women and disadvantaged groups in rural areas are presented below:

- *Taking the training to the doorstep of people*- adopting a cluster based approach to skill training can significantly improve access to vocational education in rural areas.
- *Keeping a flexible program structure* - Making skill training programs more flexible by offering short term courses (average 2 to 3 months) and limiting the course timings to maximum 4 hours a day, has proved successful in increasing women enrollment.
- *Participatory course design*- involving the community to be trained as part of the course design ensures high enrolment and low drop out. Enrollment of women in the KVK program can be further increased by mandating participation of women in the Kaushalya Vardhan Samitis.

- *Training in accordance with market demand* -Providing need based, industry responsive courses enhances the opportunities for employment and self-employment.
- *Designing a clear policy* - A clear policy framework with roles and responsibilities of government and private stakeholders clearly delineated, and mobilizing existing government machinery to make decision-making prompt and responsive are key reasons for the successful implementation of the program.
- *Creating linkages with markets*-By fostering industry linkages and tie-ups with traders and marketers for home-based businesses, the KVK program can be made more attractive for prospective trainees.
- *Breaking the Gender stereotype*- Skills such as tailoring are culturally associated with women while skills such as plumbing, basic electrical are associated with men. KVK program has been able to break some of these barriers by offering courses such as motor driving and basic computer education which are equally popular among men and women. The program has the potential to encourage participation of women in non-traditional occupations.

### The way forward

The KVK program has proved successful in Gujarat by making vocational training more accessible in rural areas. Given the remarkable success of KVK, Government of Gujarat has recently constituted a State level Kaushalya Vardhan Society to further promote and strengthen the program. The CET has decided to expand the program in tribal and further remote areas in the coming years. Recognizing the huge demand of vocational training in rural areas, a parallel initiative of introducing vocational courses in upper primary schools has also been initiated. The potential expansion of KVK program in urban areas specially focused on the urban poor is also being explored.

The KVK program has been widely appreciated by the Planning Commission (Government of India), Ministry of Labour, Government of India; Government officials from other states and other bodies including the Confederation of Indian Industry, FICCI and The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM). The program has also received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration in 2012 for its innovative approach and successful implementation. Senior officials from the Government of India including the Director General of Employment & Training and Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment have visited KVK centres in Gujarat and appreciated the concept and implementation of the program. The Planning Commission is considering adopting the KVK model to design PPP architecture for 5000 new skill development centers (SDCs) to be established all across the country. Ms. Sonal Mishra IAS, the Commissioner, Employment and Training, Government of Gujarat presented the modalities of the KVK program before Advisor to Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission to facilitate the expansion of this PPP model all across India.

Limited upfront investment in infrastructure, utilizing existing government machinery for program implementation, high flexibility and participatory planning are key features that make the program adaptable and replicable in other states of the country.

## Success stories at KVK

1

### Courses focused on home-based employment at KVK, Chital

*Promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship among women*

Chital is a census town with a population of 12,000 located in Amreli district. Agriculture and cotton ginning are popular trades in the region. The nearest college is in Amreli and the nearest ITI is at Babra. A KVK centre was started in the primary school compound in the pilot phase in 2010. Recognizing the limited opportunities for women to acquire higher education and employment in the village, the kaushalya samiti members agreed to introduce more women oriented courses such as tailoring and beauty and make-up. In the last three years, the KVK has seen active participation from women in these courses and several trainees have started home based businesses after completing courses KVK.



Deepti Limabsaiya is 19 years old. She completed her schooling till 12<sup>th</sup> standard from the Chital high school. Her parents were reluctant to send her to college for further education which is located in Amreli. The parents were also not in a position to bear hostel and education expenses. Deepti decided to enroll in a tailoring course at the KVK which is only 5 minutes walking distance from her house. After completing the course in two months, she enrolled in the basic computing and beauty and makeup courses. She successfully completed all the courses and received certification from GCVT. With the guidance and encouragement from the KVK trainers, Deepti started a home business in tailoring. Currently, she is also looking at prospects for higher education.

*“Taking courses at KVK has been a great experience. The teachers are very friendly and encouraging. I learnt tailoring there and now I am able to stitch a whole chaniyacholi. I am able to earn up to Rs. 5000 in the Navratri season!”*

Tasnim Vora got married and came to Chital 6 years back. As a young mother of two children she had limited opportunity to venture out of her home for education and employment. Tasnim enrolled in tailoring course in KVK in 2011. The course offered her a flexible schedule and she was able to complete the course in two months while balancing her household responsibilities. Tasnim has now started a home business in tailoring. She loves making garments for children and appreciates the extra income it gets her.

*“KVK has provided me the necessary skills and empowered me to start my home business. I am very happy!”*



**2****Short term industry responsive courses at KVK, Sanskardham, Godhavi**

*Providing focused skill specific training by harnessing industry linkages*

Sanand is a town in Ahmedabad district which has recently emerged as the automobile hub of Gujarat. To promote industrial development in the area, the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) has declared Sanand as a special industrial estate. Major industries in Sanand include TATA Nano, Ford, Bosch, Nestle and Hitachi Hirel.

A KVK centre was established at Sanskardham School in Godhavi village in 2010, just a few km. away from Sanand with an aim of providing short term vocational training to the youth and women in the area. Since availability of skilled and semi-skilled workforce is a key requirement for industries, the KVK center also able to establish key linkages with the industries and manufacturing units in the Sanand GIDC area. In October 2011, Tata Yazaki approached KVK Godhavi to offer a 5 day course in electric controlling system. The course was hosted at the KVK centre and an expert trainer was provided by TATA Yazaki. The course titled “wire harness for passenger cars” includes 2 days of theory classes and 3 days of practical training. KVK advertised the course among its students as well as other youth in the catchment area and managed the enrollment process. Students with an SSC certificate were offered admission into the course. 768 people including men and women enrolled for the course. A recruitment fair was organized on the KVK campus in Sanskardham upon course completion. 324 people were selected and were directly employed at the TATA Nano plant in Sanand.

This model of industry responsive skill development works in favour of both the trainees and the industry, especially in urban and suburban areas. The industry is provided a pool of skilled manpower to select from and the local youth are guaranteed employment.



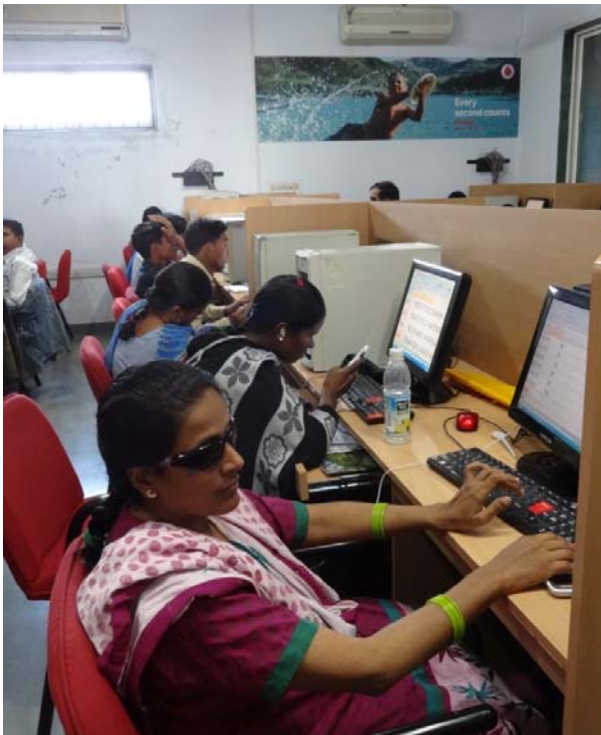
*Short term course and job fair organized by KVK in partnership with TATA Yazaki in 2011*

## 3

### Special industry-linked courses for blind people at BPA KVK Mainstreaming the differently-abled in formal workforce

The Blind People's Association (BPA) is a professional organization in Ahmedabad which works for providing education, employment opportunities, equal rights and quality life to people with disabilities. BPA partners with likeminded organizations, industry, and government institutes, to provide skill training as well as employment and self-employment opportunities to people with disability.

The Department of Employment and Training started its first KVK specially aimed at the differently-abled at the BPA campus in 2011. The courses offered at KVK, BPA include basic computer skills, scientific massage, plumbing, mobile repairing and other soft skill training such as communication and spoken English. All training tools and materials are published in Braille for



*Differently-abled candidates employed at the Vodafone call centre*

The KVK has a partnership with Vodafone India Ltd., one of India's leading telecommunications providers. Vodafone runs a call center on the BPA campus. People with disabilities who have completed the basic computer training have an opportunity to work at the call centre. Vodafone selects eligible candidates and provides them additional job specific training in the voice recognition system. On completion of the training, the selected candidates are directly employed at the call centre. Other courses offered at BPA encourage self-employment.

The short term courses at KVK also open up avenues for disabled persons to access higher education. For example eligible candidates who successfully complete the short term scientific massage course at KVK get direct admission in an 8 months medical massage program offered at the school of physiotherapy in association with Japan International Cooperation agency (JICA) and Tsukuba University, Tokyo.

Devjibhai is a spirited young man. He lost his eyesight when he was 18, but that did not deter him from completing his education and getting a job. Devji has successfully completed courses in basic computer and scientific massage at the KVK and is now employed at the Vodafone call centre.

***“Taking courses at KVK has empowered me socially and financially. I work at the Vodafone call centre and also provide home-based massages. Now that I have established a clientele, I am eager to print my own visiting cards!”***

