Impact Assessment of ITC Human Capital Development Programme

Report

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Submitted To: ITC Limited

Enduring Value

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SAMBODHI

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1. Background

As part of its commitment to inclusive and sustainable development, ITC implements its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives under the umbrella of Mission Sunehra Kal (MSK). Anchored in a dual-Horizon strategy as mentioned below, the programme addresses both immediate livelihood needs and long-term community resilience.

- **Horizon-I** focuses on **enhancing the sustainability of existing income sources** through interventions in Climate Smart Agriculture, Natural Resource Management, and livelihood diversification.
- **Horizon-II** prioritises **future readiness** by investing in human capital through education, vocational skilling, public health, and women's empowerment.

In FY 2022–23, MSK's interventions reached over 300 districts across 24 states and union territories in India, implemented in partnership with NGOs and civil society organisations. The initiatives were tailored to address region-specific challenges while aligning with broader goals of sustainable and inclusive development.

1.1 Objectives

The key objectives of the impact assessment are:

1. To establish the effectiveness and efficiency of programme design and implementation
2. To quantify the extent to which the projects have been successful in achieving the intended outcomes
3. To capture the short and long-term direct, indirect, intended, and unintended impacts
4. To establish attribution and contribution of the projects
5. To identify and capture success stories, challenges, and areas for improvement
6. To provide actionable recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of future initiatives

2. Approach and Methodology

2.1 Study Methodology and Design

The assessment adopted the **OECD-DAC evaluation framework**, focusing on key criteria such as effectiveness, efficiency, and impact. A **project-comparison model** was utilised, leveraging matched control groups due to the absence of baseline data. This design ensured credible counterfactuals for assessing programme impact.

A **convergent mixed-methods approach** was employed, combining:

- **Quantitative data** through structured household and individual surveys.
- **Qualitative insights** from in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs).

2.2 Analysis and Design Execution

The study applied the **OECD-DAC framework**, using **quantitative (STATA 13.0)** and **qualitative (Framework Method[1])** analysis to assess outcomes across education, skilling, and socio-economic dimensions. Findings were benchmarked against control groups estimates.

The evaluation followed a **three-phase approach**:

1. **Design Phase:** Included tool development, pre-testing, translation, and field team onboarding across 5 states – Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab.
2. **Implementation Phase:** Covered training, data collection (Feb 25–Mar 15, 2025), and daily monitoring via a real-time dashboard.
3. **Analysis & Dissemination Phase:** Focused on deriving insights and sharing results with stakeholders for action and scale.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Theme 1a: Support to Education – Infrastructure Support

3.1.1 Introduction

The **Support to Education - School Infrastructure and School WASH** programme, initiated by ITC, focuses on enhancing school infrastructure by facilitating essential construction activities, including the renovation of classrooms, repainting of walls, and the development of water and sanitation facilities.

The primary objective of the programme is to establish and institutionalise a sustainable maintenance management system that actively engages both students and teachers in the upkeep of these facilities and promotes hygiene awareness. To achieve this, sensitisation programmes were organised for key stakeholders, including teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) members and, a comprehensive maintenance plan was developed through consultations with these stakeholders. Furthermore, A Child Cabinet Committee was mobilised to ensure the operational management of school hygiene facilities.

In addition to school infrastructure, the programme supports the repair and enhancement of anganwadis, contributing to broader community gains. The current assessment evaluates the impact of the programme across various states, including **Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand**. A total of 46 schools participated in the assessment, with 28 schools in the Treatment group and 18 schools in the Control group.

3.1.2. Insights from Students

3.1.2.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of Students

[1] Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. BMC medical research methodology, 13, 1-8.

- A total of 1,369 Students were selected from **five states**—Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, and Punjab with an almost equal split between girls (49.8%) and boys (50.2%).
- Daily school attendance was high across both groups (Treatment Group = 92.4%, Control Group = 89.7%).

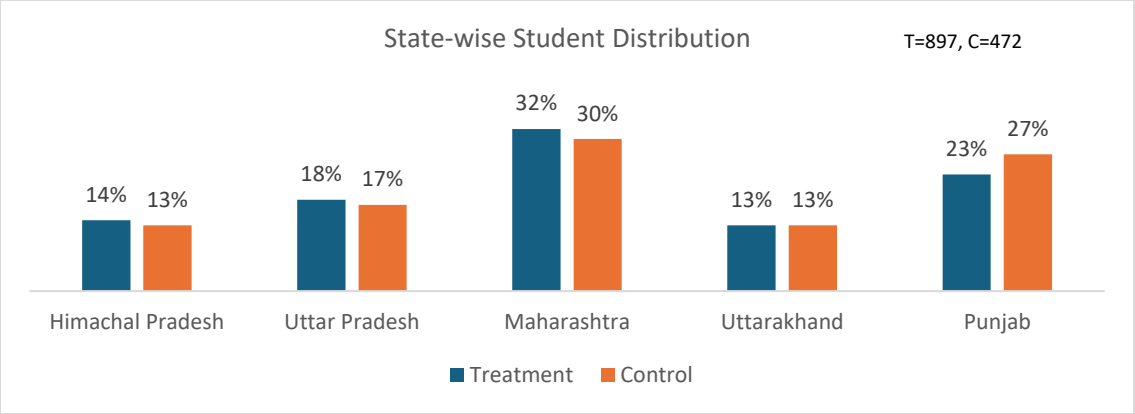


Figure 1: State-wise Student Distribution

3.1.2.2 School Infrastructure

- Majority students in the treatment group confirmed changes in school infrastructure during this period.
- Following the intervention, access to drinking water increased from 83% to 90% and handwashing stations grew from 49% to 92%.
- The availability of separate toilets for boys and girls improved from 83% to 89%, while shared toilets decreased from 18% to just 6%, supporting better privacy and dignity, and strong improvements in hygiene infrastructure.
- We observed safety-related upgrades such as improved boundary walls (66% to 91%) and roof repairs (21% to 56%) and health facilities strengthening with increased first aid boxes (from 34% to 59%) and soap banks (from 20% to 70%).

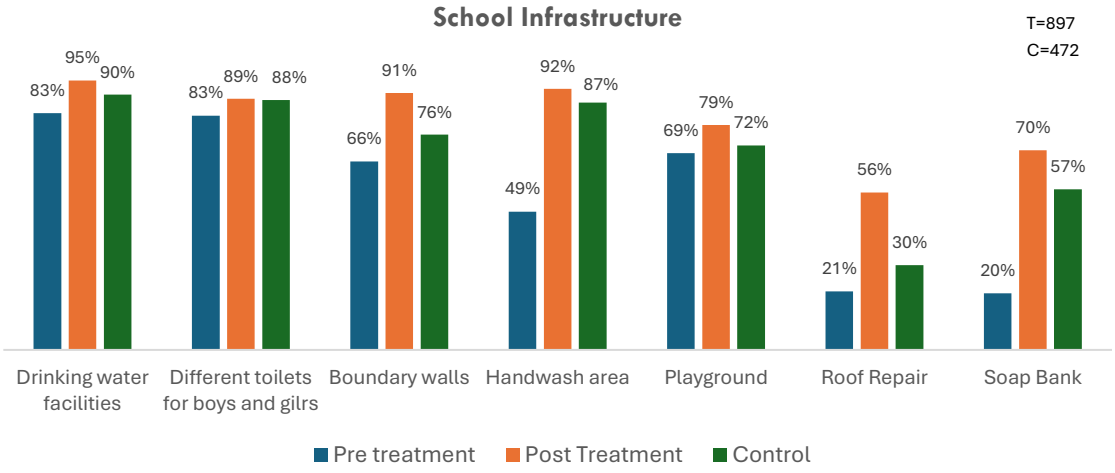


Figure 2: School Infrastructure

3.1.2.3. Current status of classrooms

- Nearly all schools in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh reported upgrades to classroom walls, with 100%, 99%, and 96% improvements, respectively.
- Maharashtra and Uttarakhand had 75% and 85% upgrades, respectively.
- Punjab showed the proportion of e-classrooms, with 63% of classrooms using digital tools, followed by Maharashtra at 56% and Uttar Pradesh at 46%. Uttarakhand had only 11% of classrooms with digital tools.
- Punjab also saw the greatest improvement in floor tiling, with 75% of classrooms getting tiled floors, while Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh saw 70% and 84% improvements, respectively.

3.1.2.3.1. Classroom aesthetics

- Classrooms in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh showed a dramatic reduction in chipped paint from 33% to 0%, and from 34% to 1%, respectively, whereas murals appeared in 66% and 96% classrooms in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, respectively. In Maharashtra, 99% of classrooms featured educational murals after the intervention, including visual aids like subject trees and the fundamental rights chart.

3.1.2.3.2. Change in learning level due to changes in classroom

- In Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, 80% and 77% of students, respectively, expressed strong agreement that the classroom upgrades helped them concentrate better. While in Maharashtra, 63% strongly agreed and 36% somewhat agreed, showing positive learning outcomes across regions.

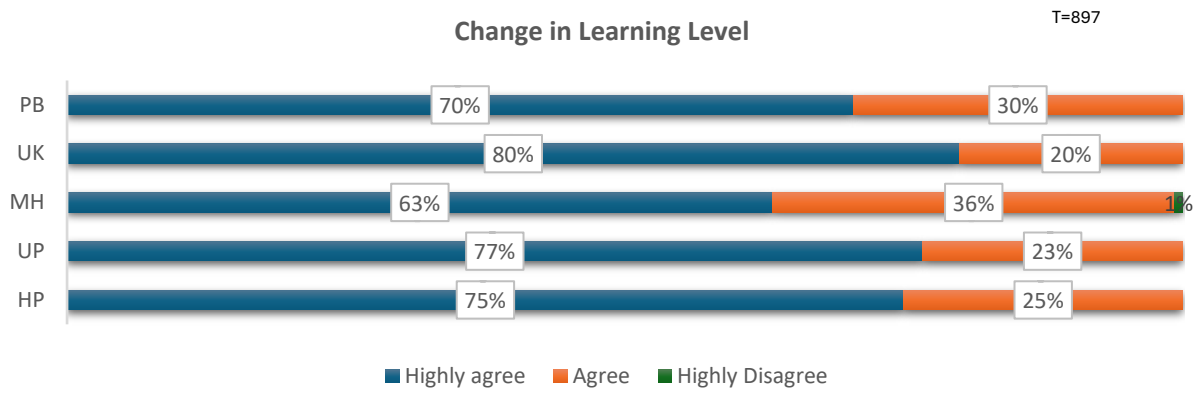


Figure 3: Change in Learning Level

3.1.2.3. Current Status of Toilets[2]

- Findings from the study revelaed significant improvements in the availability of toilets in schools across Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Punjab following the intervention.
- The proportion of schools with less than three toilets eliminated in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, and significantly lowered in Uttar Pradesh (from 27% to 2%) and Uttarakhand (from 56% to 18%) — effectively addressing the most critical sanitation gaps.

.3.1.2.3.1. Availability of water in toilets

- There was a noticeable improvement in water availability in toilets after the intervention across schools in **Himachal Pradesh**, **Uttar Pradesh**, **Uttarakhand**, and **Punjab**.
- Before the intervention, only 84% of schools in Himachal Pradesh had consistently available water, and 8% reported occasional availability. Post-intervention, 99**%** of schools had water consistently available.
- In Punjab and Uttarakhand, the improvement was significant, with constant water availability in schools rising from 34% to 94% and from 65% to 89%, respectively.
- However, the control group in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab still faced significant water supply issues, with **30%** and **14%** reporting occasional availability, respectively.

3.1.2.3.2. Security and Hygiene

- Improved toilet facilities significantly boosted students' sense of security as 99% in Himachal Pradesh, 87% in Uttarakhand, and 89% in Punjab respectively, felt more secure compared to

[2] ***Note:*** Since toilets were not included as part of the infrastructure provided in Maharashtra, this analysis will focus exclusively on the four remaining states. The exclusion of Maharashtra is based on the specific infrastructure criteria set for this study, ensuring that the findings remain relevant and consistent across the selected states. By concentrating on these four states, the analysis aims to provide a clearer, more accurate evaluation of the program's impact within the context of the infrastructure provided.

notably lower percentages in control groups. In Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, 63% of students said they felt more comfortable using toilets after improvement.

- In Punjab, 22% of students reported no longer needing to leave school mid-way for toilet-related reasons, compared to just 7% in the control group.

"Before the intervention, the schools were underdeveloped, and basic facilities were lacking. However, after ITC's support, the schools have seen significant improvements. They created toilets, cleaned the facilities, and handwashing stations were installed. The village chief is particularly grateful for the organisation's efforts in providing essential services like water and hygiene, which have made a tangible difference in the lives of students and the community." – PRI Member, Uttar Pradesh

3.1.2.4. Impact of Knowledge and Hygiene Initiatives on Student Engagement and Hygiene Practices

- Treatment schools showed near-universal participation in hygiene education—100% in Himachal Pradesh, 99% in Uttar Pradesh, and 98% in Uttarakhand.
- Control group participation remained limited, especially in Uttarakhand, where it was just 42%, emphasising the role of structured interventions.
- Hygiene education classes increased from 76% to 82%, and hygiene competitions rose from 51% to 86%, fostering active engagement.
- Hygiene corners grew from 32% to 68%, and hygiene monitoring boards from 73% to 91%, offering consistent visual hygiene prompts.

Impact on Hygiene and Cleanliness Practices

- Nearly 100% of students in Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh reported consistent handwashing.
- Oral hygiene saw major gains; in Himachal Pradesh, the percentage of students brushing teeth regularly jumped from 27% to 96%.
- Disease awareness also increased significantly, from just 21% in the control group to 79% in the treatment group in Himachal Pradesh, showcasing the preventive impact of education.

Hygiene, sanitation, or health campaigns

- Most treatment schools conducted hygiene, sanitation, and health campaigns—98% in Himachal Pradesh, 99% in Uttar Pradesh, 96% in Uttarakhand, and 90% in Punjab.
- Control schools were less active in organising campaigns—only 85% in Uttar Pradesh and 37% in Uttarakhand, pointing to a gap in student engagement opportunities.

3.1.3. Insights from Teachers Perspective

3.1.3.1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Teachers

- The teaching workforce is composed of 55.3% female and 44.7% male teachers.
- 14% of the teachers have 0–10 years of experience, 29% have 10–20 years, and 55.2% have more than 20 years of experience.
- A total of 38 teachers from the treatment schools were interviewed.

3.1.3.2. Infrastructure Improvement

- 97% of teachers reported noticeable enhancements in school infrastructure over the past two years.
- Post-intervention, states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab achieved adequacy in key facilities like blackboards, benches, toilets, and water supply as compared to pre-intervention.

3.1.3.3. WASH Training for Teachers and Activities for Students

- Formal WASH training for teachers was inconsistent—only 25% of teachers in Himachal Pradesh and 64% in Uttarakhand received training, while no training was reported in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, or Punjab, highlighting a significant capacity-building gap**.** Although 1–2 teachers were mandated to attend WASH-related sessions conducted for students, interactions with headmasters indicated that no dedicated training sessions were held exclusively for teachers to enhance their understanding and perception of improved hygiene and sanitation practices. After training, nearly all schools conducted WASH activities for students, showing strong programme outreach.
- Post-intervention, all states reported better attendance, especially Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, where 100% of teachers linked improved WASH facilities to increased student presence—signaling a direct link between infrastructure and educational access.

3.1.3.5. Student and School Governance Structures: Child Cabinets and SDMCs

- All schools surveyed have an active child cabinet, promoting student participation in school governance and leadership. In Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Punjab, child cabinet meetings are held bi-weekly.
- School Development and Management Committees (SDMCs) are present in all schools in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Uttarakhand. In Punjab, 82% of schools reported having SDMCs, while 18% lacked them.
- ITC provided the majority of funding for infrastructure improvements, covering 70–80% of renovation costs. The remaining portion was contributed by the community and/or schools, a strategic approach designed to foster local ownership and long-term sustainability of the intervention.

"When we first started this journey, the school was in dire need of improvement. The classrooms were unbearably hot, and the facilities were outdated. But ITC came in and made a massive difference. They contributed about 70-80% of the expenses for the renovation work, including the new classrooms, painting, and essential repairs." – Member, School Development Committee.

3.1.4. Insights from Anganwadi's Perspectives

As part of the ITC programme, infrastructure support was provided to Anganwadis across five states—Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh. To assess the impact of this support, Sambodhi visited six Anganwadis to gather data on the improvements and understand the perspectives of the staff.

3.1.4.1 Infrastructure Support Impact

- ITC's support transformed Anganwadis by moving key facilities like toilets, kitchens, and water filters indoors, enhancing hygiene and convenience.
- Renovations added space, natural light, and ventilation, improving cleanliness and making centers more inviting.
- All respondents reported significant benefits, including higher enrollment, better attendance and stronger community and parental engagement.

Infrastructure Support	HP	UP	MH	UK	PB
Toilet	■	■	■	■	
Boundary wall	■	■			
classroom	■	■			■
Handwash area	■	■			
Anganwadi painting/Renovation			■		

3.1.3.2 WASH Awareness and Training Impact

- All respondents were actively involved in the WASH initiative and received comprehensive hygiene training.
- Respondents took part in awareness campaigns that promoted better sanitation practices.
- Participants showed strong understanding of key practices like handwashing, safe water use, and toilet hygiene.

"In the past, the children had to go outside to use the community washroom, which often led to confusion and discomfort. Now that the Anganwadi has its own dedicated washrooms and wash basins, the children follow a strict protocol."– Anganwadi, Punjab

3.1.5. Challenges

While the **Infrastructure support and WASH initiatives** have shown positive outcomes, gaps in teacher training on WASH practices were noted across several regions, which should be addressed for ensuring long-term sustainability of the programme.

3.1.6 Recommendations

One recommendation for tackling the above challenge is to encourage all teachers, especially in regions with limited training, to participate in ongoing WASH training that covers water handling, hygiene, and

waste management. It would be helpful to tailor training content to address local challenges such as water scarcity, culturally sensitive sanitation practices, and disaster preparedness in areas prone to floods or droughts.

3.2 Theme 1b: Education – Mainstreaming Out-of-School Children through Supplementary Learning Centres

The SLC intervention focused on improving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) and mainstreaming Out of School Children into formal education. A total of 478 children were covered in the impact study across ten SLCs. Of these, 66% (315) were part of the treatment group—children who had attended an SLC and/or had been mainstreamed into formal schools—while the remaining 34% (163) formed the control group comprising children who remained out of school. The intervention demonstrated positive learning outcomes and showcased a replicable community-based model for reaching excluded learners.

3.2.1. Demographic Profile of Students in Supplementary Learning Centers

Age-wise Distribution: The Secondary Learning Centre (SLC) intervention in Saharanpur engaged children across a wide age spectrum, focusing on those most at risk of educational exclusion:

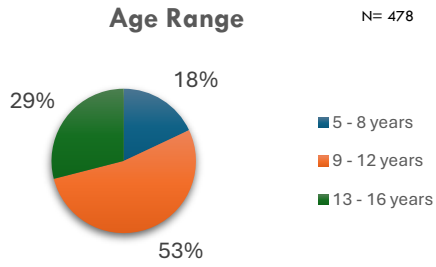


Figure 4: Age-wise distribution of students in SLCs

- **5–8 years (18%)**: Early-grade learners, mostly never enrolled or early dropouts, at risk of missing foundational learning.
- **9–12 years (53%)**: The largest cohort, typically in middle grades, with frequent schooling disruptions or learning gaps requiring timely intervention.
- **13–16 years (29%)**: Older children and adolescents, often long-term dropouts or irregular attendees, needing intensive bridge and remedial support.

Gender-wise Distribution: The gender distribution was nearly equal across both groups, reflecting the programme's emphasis on gender-inclusive outreach:

- **Treatment Group**: 49% male, 51% female.
- **Control Group**: 51% male, 49% female.

3.2.2. Impact on Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN)

The ASER tool—India's widely accepted benchmark for assessing foundational skills among children aged 5–16—was used to evaluate learning outcomes. Sambodhi conducted sample tests and basis the test conducted, results showed a significant impact of the SLC intervention on both literacy and numeracy. In reading, 91% of SLC students reached the Story Level, demonstrating the ability to read and comprehend Grade II-level texts. In contrast, only 2% of the control group achieved this, while 74% remained at the Beginner Level, unable to read letters or words.

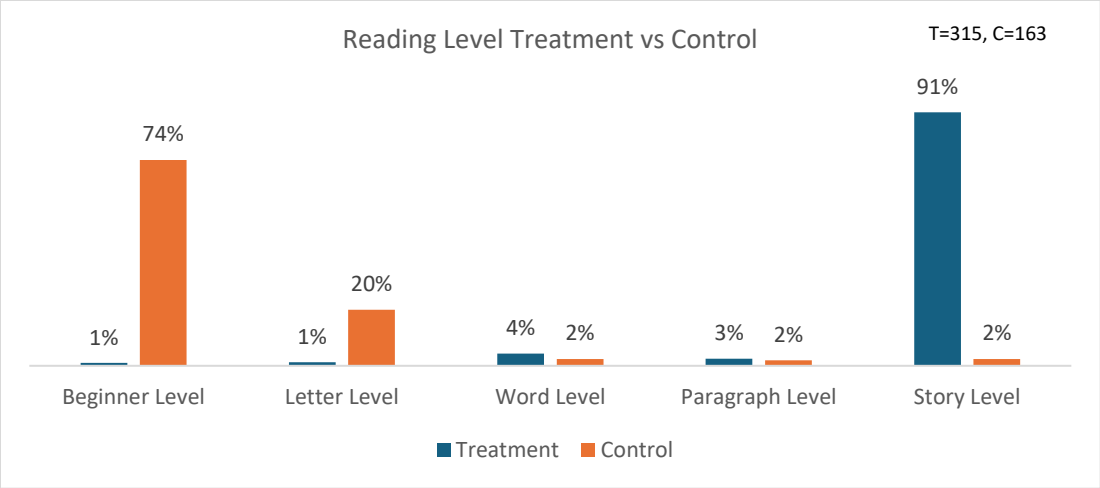


Figure 5: Reading Level Treatment Vs Control group

Numeracy outcomes were similarly strong. 67% of SLC students could solve division problems, the highest level on the ASER scale, whereas 87% of the control group failed to progress beyond number recognition. These results show a clear difference between the treatment and control groups.

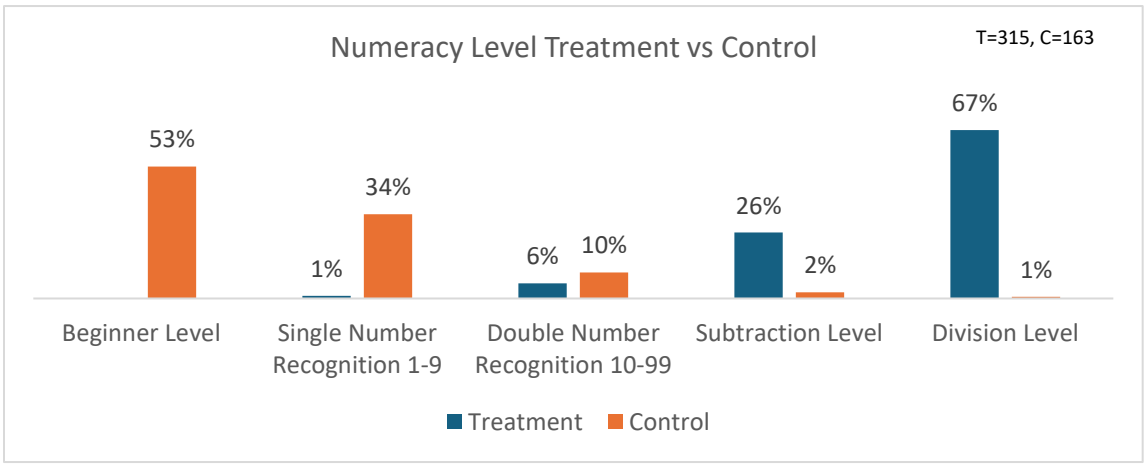


Figure 6: Numeracy Level Treatment Vs Control group

These findings affirm the effectiveness of the SLC model in equipping out-of-school children with essential FLN skills, preparing them for reintegration into formal education.

3.2.3. Students' Interface, Experience & Engagement at SLCs

Among the treatment group, **82% of students attended the SLC for over a year**, while **18% attended for less than a year**. The high retention reflects the centre's ability to sustain interest and provide consistent support needed to close learning gaps.

Structured interviews with 315 students revealed a **100% satisfaction rate**, with **97% attending daily**. Top reasons included **learning new things (92%)**, drawing (80%), and games (72%). High attendance and enjoyment reflect the SLC's success in creating a welcoming, child-friendly learning space.

Learning Activities: Students showed strong academic interest—93% enjoyed reading, 56% liked maths, and 90% enjoyed listening to teachers. All students reported that teachers used fun, engaging methods. 98% felt happy while learning, and 88% had learned something new in the past week, indicating consistent academic progression.

Hygiene Practices: Hygiene education had high uptake —100% washed hands before eating, 98% used soap and water, and 99% had soap banks at their centres. Teachers (99%) and parents (96%) were key influencers, showing a positive spillover of hygiene practices into home settings.

Bal Manch Leadership Activities: ***Bal Manch*****, the children's leadership and peer-learning group, emerged as a significant feature of the SLC intervention designed to foster 21st-century skills such as leadership, collaboration, accountability, and communication among students**. 55% of students participated in Bal Manch, taking roles like PM or Health Minister. Among them, 78% supported peers academically, 76% promoted hygiene, and 49% managed cleanliness. 99% reminded peers to wash their hands, reinforcing leadership, empathy, and civic responsibility through peer-led initiatives.

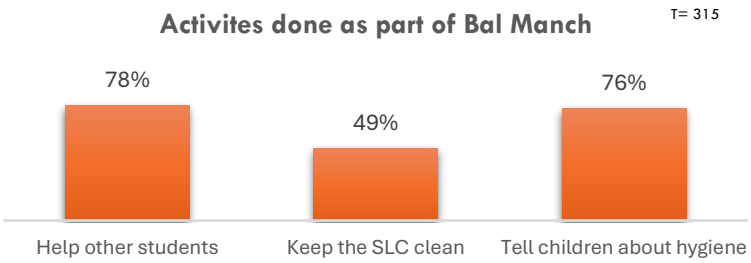


Figure 7: Activities done as part of Bal Manch

3.2.4. SLC Teacher's Profile & Training related aspects

Among 12 teachers providing their services at Supplementary Learning Centres, 83% had prior teaching experience; 50% held graduate or higher degrees. Most (67%) had served 3–5 years, reflecting strong retention. All received training in parent counselling (100%), child engagement (92%), and teaching methods (83%), though many requested more hands-on sessions by the programme team.

Motivation & Roles: Teachers were driven by passion for education (100%) and community development (92%). They supported classroom instruction, parent engagement, and peer learning, often taking initiative to address barriers like absenteeism through home visits and counselling.

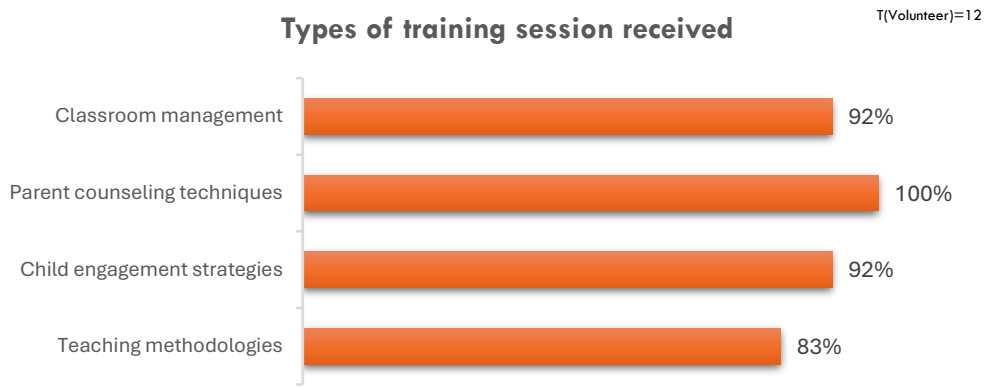


Figure 8: Types of training sessions received

Collaboration, Parent Engagement, and Monitoring Practices: 75% of volunteers engaged with parents regularly; 100% observed increased enrolments due to awareness drives and counselling. 58% reported that students continue in SLCs, with most children showing regular attendance.

Learning Progress and Pedagogical Approaches: Reading and writing showed the most improvement, as reported by 100% of volunteers, followed by math (83%) and general knowledge (75%). However, English (83%) and advanced math (67%) remained areas where students needed additional support.

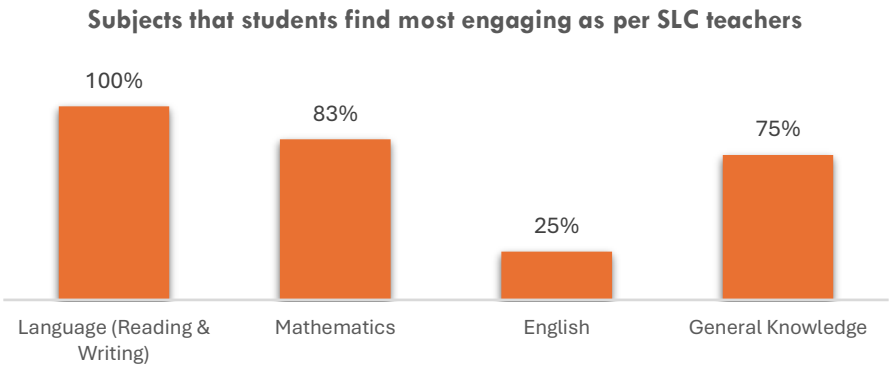


Figure 9: Subjects that students find most engaging

Activity-based learning was widely adopted, with 58% of volunteers using it regularly and 42% often. Techniques included games, TLMs like sticks and drawings, and morning assemblies with rhymes and storytelling to boost interest.

Teachers in SLC observed high participation—67% noted consistent engagement in discussions. Role-plays through *Bal Manch* roles fostered leadership and confidence, making learning more engaging and inclusive for previously disengaged children.

Leadership & Confidence Building: Children took active roles as PMs or Health Ministers in Bal Manch, managing hygiene and peer support. Volunteers noted this boosted confidence, motivation, and attendance, as children felt responsible for their duties.

Parental Involvement & Mindset Shift: 67% of volunteers observed increased parental willingness to enroll daughters, and 75% noted that parents had become more involved in children's learning. Material incentives (notebooks, T-shirts) were also effective in boosting regularity.

Barriers to regular attendance of students, as per SLC teachers: According to the observations of the teachers, a majority of students attended classes regularly, while a smaller segment (42%) were less consistent in their attendance. This variation is largely due to several key barriers, including household responsibilities (83%), long travel distances (67%) and family migration (42%). Despite these challenges, 58% of teachers reported that children frequently transitioned to formal schools, and 42% observed a decline in dropout rates. Regular follow-ups and parent counselling helped mitigate the risks.

3.2.5. Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Academic Support**
    - Provide adequate teaching-learning materials (TLMs)
    - Introduce remedial modules for English and Maths
    - Expand curriculum to include life skills and digital literacy
2. **Enhance Volunteer Capacity & Motivation**
    - Conduct quarterly refresher trainings and peer-learning sessions
    - Establish non-monetary incentive systems for volunteer retention
3. **Boost Student Attendance & Retention**
    - Implement household engagement and community mobilisation strategies
    - Pilot flexible class timings and seasonal adjustments
4. **Deepen Community & Parental Involvement**
    - Use visual tools to involve parents in learning reviews
    - Formalise Bal Manch's role in dropout prevention and peer-led advocacy
5. **Address Structural Barriers**
    - Link families to welfare schemes (e.g., scholarships, food security)
    - Explore transport solutions (e.g., pooled bicycles or local shuttles) for remote areas

The SLC model is impactful and scalable. Future efforts should focus on resource gaps, volunteer development, and systemic linkages to sustain learning outcomes and support smooth school transitions.

3.3. Theme 2: Skilling of Youth

To leverage India's demographic dividend and address unemployment, ITC's Mission Sunehra Kal launched a youth skilling programme under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), targeting marginalised youth - especially women - with market-relevant training. The programme was executed across ITC factories and agri-business catchments in multiple locations.

The assessment explores the following key areas:

Key areas of assessment in Skilling Programme

With respect to skill acquisition, the programme fostered critical technical and sector specific skills alongside soft skill development, enabling underprivileged youth to access jobs and pursue self-employment avenues. The resultant employment outcomes included economic empowerment through enhanced earnings, formal channels of income and improved decision-making capabilities of project participants concerning their careers & finances. Further evidence of the programme's success was reflected in the social sphere with the participants reporting better living standards, improved access to healthcare and education and elevated social status – suggesting broader community-level transformation driven. Thus, the skilling model aimed not only to enhance individual income levels but also to promote long-term livelihood security and self-reliance through targeted, inclusive training efforts.

3.3.1. Sample Profile & Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The assessment covered **287 trained youth** under the programme—**150 in Saharanpur** and **137 in Gorakhpur**—forming the **treatment group**. A **control group of 137 individuals** (70 in Saharanpur, 67 in Gorakhpur). Stringent socio-demographic matching ensured comparability between both groups for reliable impact analysis.

The **average age of participants was 23 years**, reflecting a sharp focus on India's under-25 youth—a key demographic seeking better employment opportunities and higher incomes.

There was a strong gender focus, with **66% of beneficiaries being women**. This is significant, as a policy brief by ADBI shows that women with formal training can earn up to 110% more than those without, highlighting the programme's potential to boost gender-inclusive economic growth.[3]

[3] https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2018/03/17/women-indias-economic-growth#:~:text=At%2017%25%20of%20GDP%2C%20the,could%20join%20the%20work%20force.

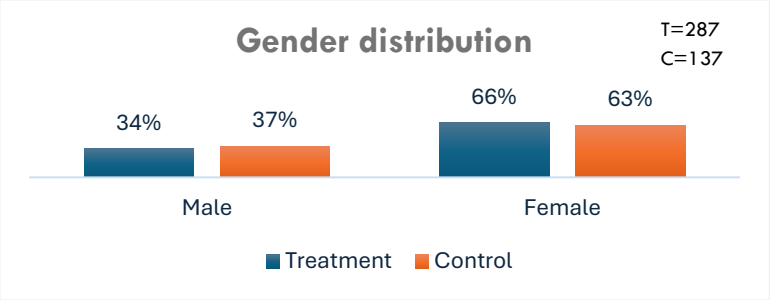


Figure 10: Gender distribution

The programme also achieved **high representation from marginalised communities.** The **Treatment Group** comprised of 34%-SC, 50%-OBC &15%-General sampled candidates and the **Control group** consisted of 32%-SC, 59%-OBC & 9%-General individuals, indicating effective outreach and growing recognition of vocational training as a viable path to economic mobility. Thus, the sample is **predominantly from marginalised communities** (SC and OBC), aligning with the programme's focus on inclusive skilling. Furthermore, the Treatment and Control groups are relatively comparable in composition.

Educational qualifications among project participants were relatively high – 59% had undergraduate or postgraduate degrees and 41% had completed schooling. This strong academic base has laid the foundation for the candidates to quickly grasp complex concepts enshrined in technical courses (tallying, nursing, data entry operations, software applications etc.) and the trained candidates are likely to contribute innovative ideas and possess strong technical proficiency, equipping them to contribute meaningfully to their professional roles. Research too highlights how quality education fosters advanced cognitive skills like logic, problem-solving, analytical abilities and critical thinking, essential for skill enhancement and promotes continuous learning in a rapidly evolving, globalised world.[4] [5] Thus, education and skill development are increasingly vital to individual growth, workforce readiness and national economic progress.

3.3.2. Project Awareness, Training & Skill Development

The project effectively targeted **NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth**– with **73% of surveyed candidates** reporting they were not engaged in any job, course, or education at the time of enrolment. This is significant, considering 34% of youth in Uttar Pradesh (15–29 years) fall under the category, making it crucial to offer them viable economic opportunities to support the nation's growth.[6]

[4] Soni, P., Gupta, A., Karma, N., Neema, R., & Kanude, K. R. (2025). THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA. SIGNIFICANCE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN EMPLOYABILITY, 45.

[5] Jafarov, Sarkhan. "Education and Skill Development: A Pathway to Sustainable Growth." International Journal of Scientific Research and Management 13.2 (2025): 3963-3969.

[6] https://www.mospi.gov.in/percentage-youth-not-education-employment-or-trainingfor-each-stateut-age-group-wise-sector-wise

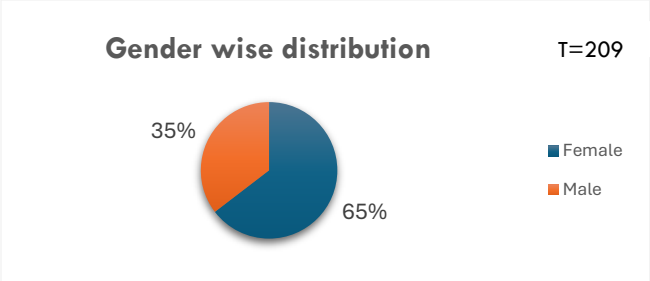


Figure 11: Gender wise distribution – NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training)

The candidates learnt of the training programme and gained awareness through community outreach, peer groups, and local mobilisation efforts.

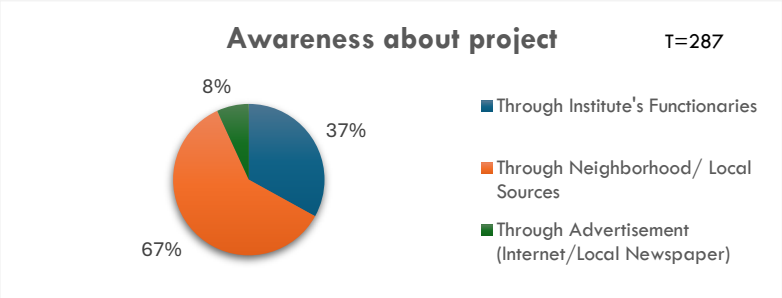


Figure 12: Medium to gain awareness about project

A majority of the 287 candidates joined the programme in pursuit of **better job opportunities and income**, reflecting strong economic aspirations.

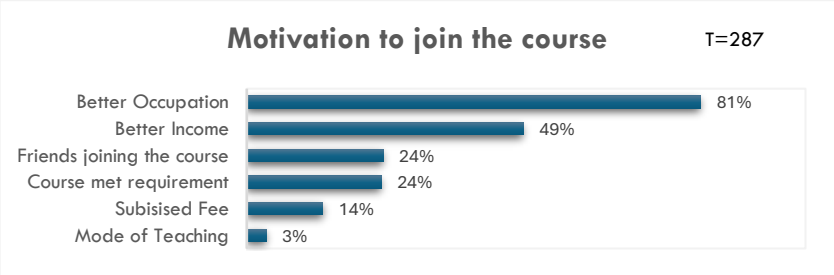


Figure 13: Motivation to join the training programme

The participants enrolled in a number of **training courses**, ranging from **technical trades to service-oriented roles.** These courses, along with technical skills & domain-based knowledge, also taught them **digital literacy**, and **financial management**, equipping youth for both workplace and personal financial decisions.

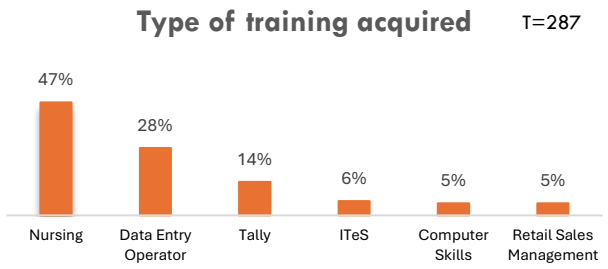


Figure 14: Type of training acquired by Respondents

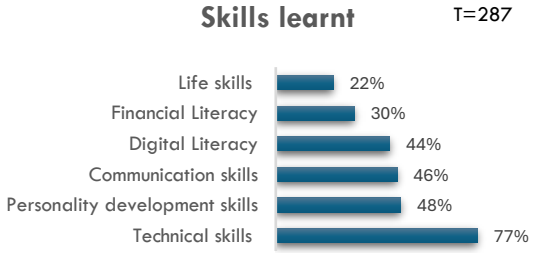
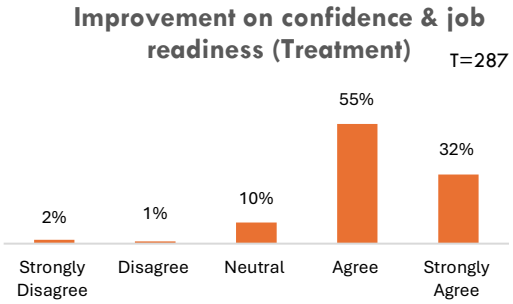


Figure 15: Skills learnt by respondents

The training modules proved particularly effective for the candidates as it **marked an increase in candidates' confidence, communication, and presentation skills**, indicating strong personal development alongside technical training.



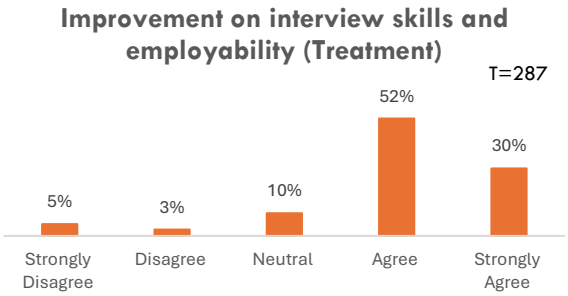


Figure 16 & Figure 17: Improvement in candidates' confidence, communication skills, and employability

As a result of the programme's subject coverage and skill dissemination, the beneficiary candidates reflected a **clear edge in employability skills**—such as **confidence, communication, and job-readiness**, compared to the control group. Additionally, the treatment group benefited from programme components such as **exposure visits, guest lectures** by external professionals, and **internship opportunities**. These real-world engagements likely sharpened participants' understanding of workplace expectations. This cumulatively demonstrated the preparedness level of the candidates to present themselves effectively in real-world job settings.

Training Satisfaction and Outcomes showed that **92% of participants** reported high satisfaction with the training received. Key reasons included ease of **learning and retention** (61%), **balanced mix of practical and theoretical components** (57%), **exposure** to real-world professional expectations (39%), **market relevance** (22%) and **engaging content** (21%).

Nearly two-thirds of candidates received post-placement support, which contributed to their satisfaction and helped them navigate early workplace challenges.

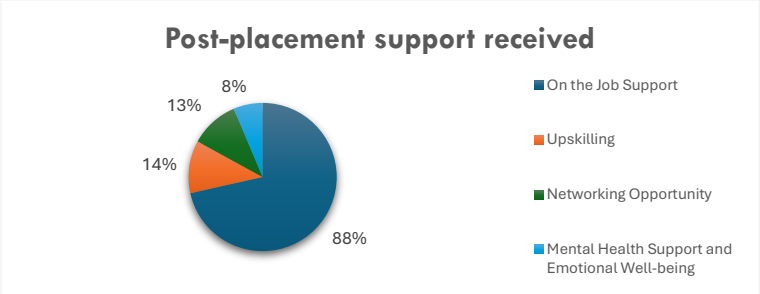


Figure 18: Nature of post-placement support received

3.3.3. Social and Economic Impact

Of the 287 candidates trained under ITC's Mission Sunehra Kal skilling initiative, **75% (N=214) secured jobs** after completing their training. On average, **monthly earnings were ₹14,392**, with salaries ranging between **₹10,000 and ₹16,000**. Earnings varied by trade and skill area, reflecting the initiative's clear impact on employability and income generation. Notably, **54% youth who secured jobs were placed within their home districts**, indicating strong local demand alignment for vocationally skilled youth and reduced migration pressure.

From an effective sample of 157 candidates, who declared their salaried income post placement, data revealed that the **training led to approximately doubling of their income with 91% increase in the earnings** of the project beneficiaries.

Economic Impact of training

Indicator – Project Respondents	Value
Increase in Income at the Individual Level	
Monthly individual income pre-training	₹7,506
Monthly individual income post-training	₹14,392
% Increase	91%
Increase in Income at the Household Level	
Monthly household income pre-training	₹18,084
Monthly household income post-training	₹25,598
% Increase	42%

Through its strong focus on skilling and livelihood enhancement, **ITC's Mission Sunehra Kal**, enabled candidates to **access better quality jobs** – characterised by regular pay, safer working conditions, opportunities for growth, and scope for continued skill development – **along with gaining higher salaries** which ultimately **improved both individual incomes and household economic well-being**.

Post-training, **salaried employment rose from 40% to 72%,** indicating the programme's success in enabling youth to access stable, entry-level jobs and transition into the formal workforce. **Self-employment** remained steady (17–20%), but **trained youth showed higher earnings**. The **shift toward tertiary sector**

jobs among project participants also suggests **improved job readiness**, compared to the control group which has largely remained in agriculture and allied sectors.

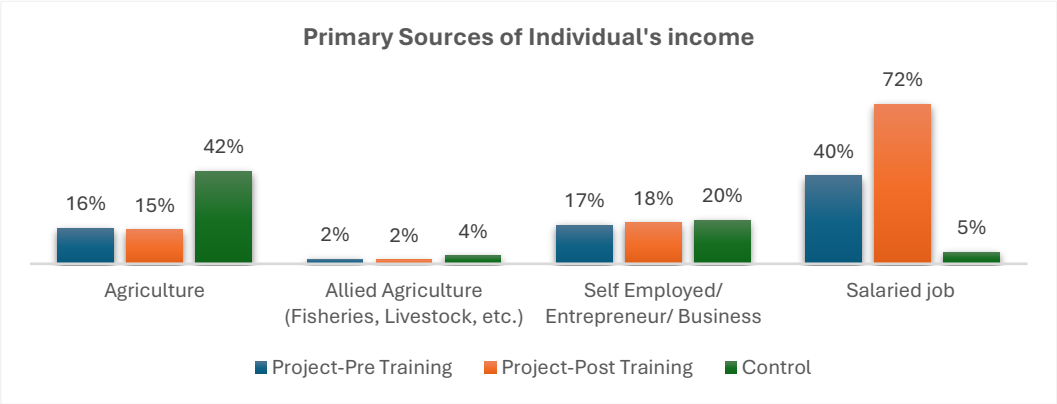


Figure 19: Sources of Individual's income

63% of respondents reported **improved decision-making post-training**, reflecting enhanced confidence and autonomy. **Career-related decisions** (46%) saw the highest improvement followed by **household finances** (28%) and **personal financial management** (22%). Gains in mobility (11%) and asset ownership (7%) remained limited, especially among women, due to prevailing patriarchal norms.

Thus, training has not only benefited individuals personally but also enabled them to contribute meaningfully to their household's overall well-being through their enhanced skills, knowledge and understanding.

3.3.4. Challenges

More than four-fifths of the respondents (84%) expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the **overall structure of the project** in terms of the **curriculum**, the distribution between **theoretical and practical aspects** of the course, and the component of gaining valuable **industrial exposure** through visits and **internship opportunities.**

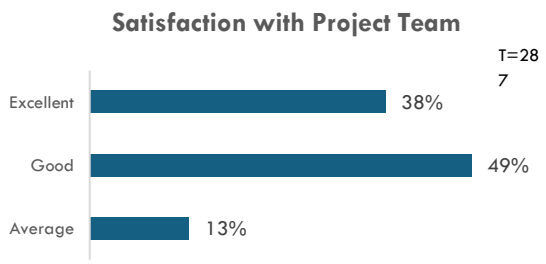


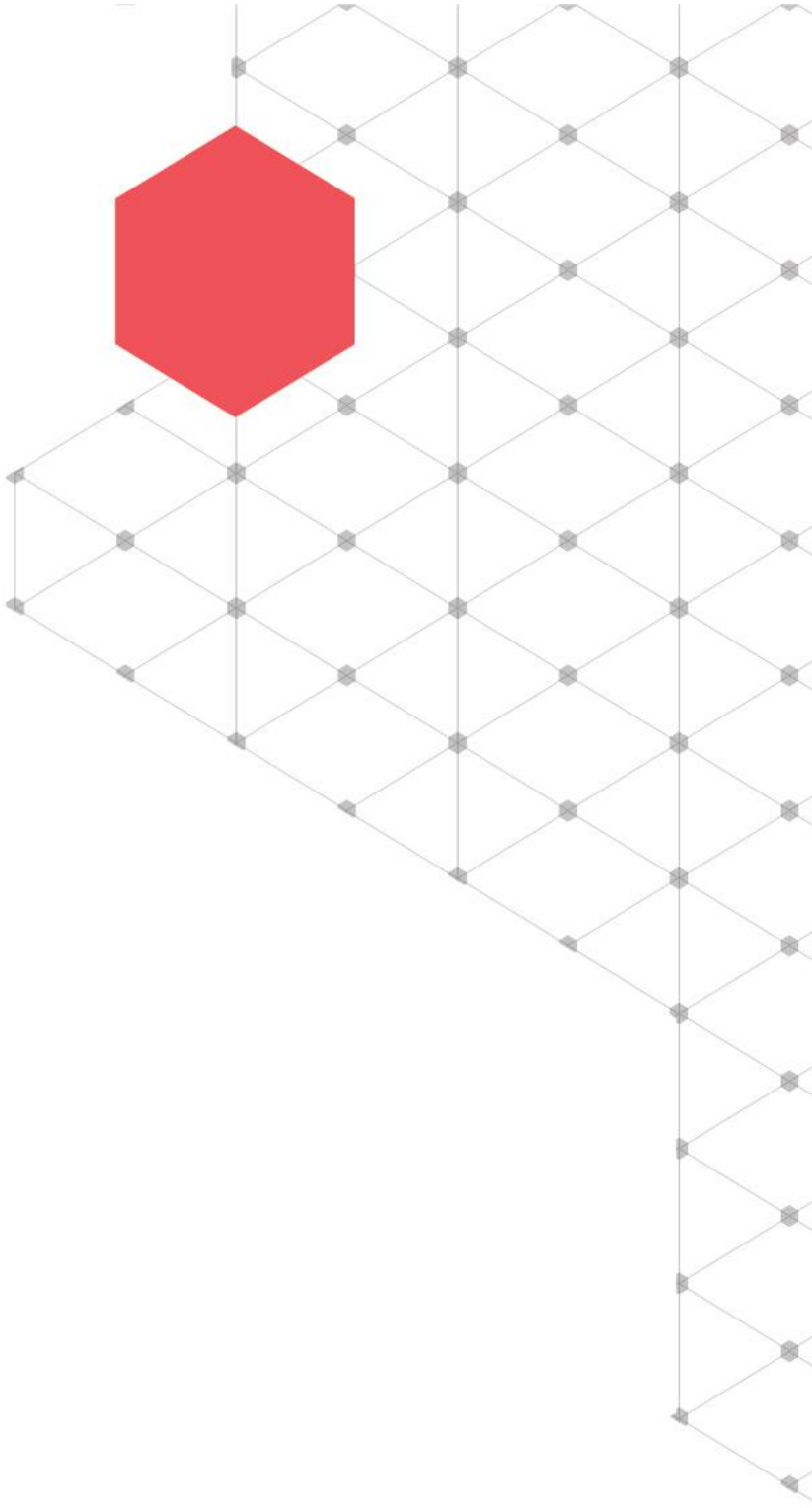
Figure 20: Satisfaction with the project team during the training

Figure 21: Satisfaction with facilities provided

3.3.5. Recommendations

On account of the above challenges and our broader assessment, we propose the following recommendations to strengthen the programme's impacts.

S.No	Suggestion	Actionable Insights
1.	**Strengthen Industry Linkages**	• Expand employer partnerships and on-the-job training opportunities • Introduce employer sensitisation on timely wage payments • Use formal agreements to ensure fair employment practices
2.	**Enhance Training Content**	• Incorporate advanced digital, technical, and AI-driven skills by offering specialised courses in coding, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and related domains • Monitor emerging sectors (healthcare, e-commerce, logistics) and customise training programmes to equip participants for future opportunities in these industries • Adopt more integrated communication strategies to create awareness and demonstrate clear pathways to benefit from available government support systems • Lay even greater emphasis on soft skills: confidence, adaptability, workplace behaviour and add career guidance modules for informed job choices ensuring longer tenure at workplaces and stability for both employers and employees
3.	**Support Mobility & Confidence Building**	• Use alumni networks and exposure visits to ease relocation fears • Offer pre-placement counselling to prepare trainees for working beyond home districts
4.	**Personalise Trainee Support**	• Introduce career mapping at the start of the training • Provide multi-track options (jobs or higher education) as per the candidate's preference • Offer mentorship to guide long-term career growth
5.	**Improve Impact Tracking**	• Implement real-time placement and retention tracking • Collect regular feedback from trainees and employers to refine the programme



SAMBODHI