

Skilling Program By PRATHAM

Impact Assessment Report March 2025

Prepared by:



Prepared for:



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Ethical Consideration

Informed consent: The interviews were done after the respondents gave their consent. Even after the interviews were completed, their permission was sought to proceed with their responses.

Confidentiality: The information provided by participants has been kept private. At no point were their data or identities disclosed. The research findings have been quoted in a way that does not expose the respondents' identities.

Comfort: The interviews were performed following the respondents' preferences. In addition, the interview time was chosen in consultation with them. At each level, respondents' convenience and comfort were considered.

Right to reject or withdraw: Respondents were guaranteed safety and allowed to refuse to answer questions or withdraw during the study.

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Executive Summary

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program, a collaborative initiative by Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd. (KMPL) and Pratham Education Foundation, was implemented under KMPL's CSR initiative as part of its "Vocational Skills and Livelihood" banner. The program aimed to enhance employability and foster economic empowerment for underserved communities by equipping youth with industry-relevant skills.

Youth unemployment remains a critical global challenge, with South Asia experiencing disproportionately high rates. Despite having one of the world's largest youth populations, India faces a severe skills gap—only 7% of the workforce has received formal vocational training. Limited access to skill development programs, lack of awareness about career pathways, and the dominance of informal employment leave millions of young people without sustainable job opportunities. These challenges are further exacerbated in rural and semi-urban areas, where inadequate training infrastructure and weak employment linkages hinder workforce integration.

To address these systemic barriers, the Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program was designed to equip economically disadvantaged youth (aged 18–35) with automotive repair and maintenance skills, bridging the gap between skill development and employment. By focusing on high-unemployment regions across India, the program aimed to enhance employability, create sustainable livelihood opportunities, and contribute to long-term economic resilience.

The program was implemented across 11 training centers in 9 states and 1 Union Territory, utilizing a three-stage hybrid skilling model:

1. **Self-Learning Awareness (L1)** – Introduced students to automotive trades and career opportunities.
2. **Foundation Skills (L2)** – Instructor-led virtual training covering theoretical knowledge.
3. **Hands-on Training (L3)** – Practical skill development through in-person training at Pratham centers and industry sites.

The program incorporated targeted mobilization, employer partnerships, and post-placement support to ensure a seamless transition from training to employment. The training covered two-wheeler and four-wheeler repair, and students were provided food, accommodation, and counseling support.

Impact Created

- 3,700+ youth reached out, with 2,634 completing the course (Female-211, Male-2423) .
- 2,441 students were placed in jobs, achieving a placement rate of over ~93% against course completion.
- **Salary range:** ₹7,103 – ₹21,000 per month, with an average salary of ₹9,890.
- **Community transformation:** The program enhanced awareness of vocational training and created role models for youth in underserved areas.

Special Mentions & Key Learnings

- **Efficient Budget Utilization:** The program operated at ₹17,249 cost per beneficiary, covering training, food, and accommodation—comparatively low by industry standards.
- **Challenges Identified:** While placement rates were strong, salary levels remained a concern, with many beneficiaries earning near or below state minimum wages. Rising costs (rent, electricity) may necessitate budget adjustments in future cycles.
- **Opportunities for Enhancement:** Expanding industry partnerships, integrating electric vehicle training, and negotiating higher starting salaries could improve long-term impact.

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program has successfully addressed structural unemployment challenges by providing disadvantaged youth with targeted skill development and industry-aligned training. The model's success in job placements, employer satisfaction, and community impact demonstrates its effectiveness. Future refinements, including higher wages, curriculum updates, and employer diversification, will strengthen the program's sustainability and scalability as a replicable model for vocational training in India.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Kotak Mahindra Prime Limited (KMPL), a subsidiary of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, is a leading non-banking financial company (NBFC) specializing in car finance and other retail lending solutions. As part of the Kotak Mahindra Group, KMPL aligns its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives with the broader mission of driving sustainable and inclusive growth. The company focuses on key areas such as education, livelihood enhancement, healthcare, and environmental sustainability. Through strategic CSR programs, KMPL supports initiatives like skill development for underprivileged youth, financial literacy programs, and community healthcare interventions.

As part of their Vocational Skills and Livelihood Initiatives, KMPL partnered with Pratham Education Foundation—a renowned non-profit dedicated to enhancing education and vocational training for underserved youth since 1994—to launch the “Kotak - Pratham Automotive Program.” This initiative aimed to equip underserved youth aged 18-35 with essential knowledge and skills in two-wheeler and four-wheeler automotive technology and facilitate job placements.

Initiated in FY 2022-23, the project ran 11 training centers across 9 States and 1 Union Territory, reaching over 3700 students through virtual self-learning classes across Ahmednagar, Bhopal, Visakhapatnam, Ralegaon, Hyderabad, Ranchi, Raipur, Kolhapur, Cuttack, Panvel and Lucknow.

1.2 Global Landscape: Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is a pressing global issue, particularly for individuals aged 18 to 30. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the global youth unemployment rate stood at approximately 13% in 2024, marking a gradual recovery from the pandemic-induced spikes of 2020 (ILO, 2024)¹. However, this recovery remains uneven across regions, with South Asia experiencing disproportionately high levels of youth unemployment.

South Asia is home to the largest youth labor force globally, with nearly half its population under 24 (World Bank, 2024)². Despite this demographic advantage, millions of young people face barriers to employment due to inadequate skills and limited access to quality education. A UNICEF report warns that without significant reforms, over half of South Asia's youth could not secure decent jobs by 2030 (UNICEF, 2019). The ILO further highlights that youth unemployment in South Asia peaked at 15.1% in 2023, with young women disproportionately affected. Alarming, approximately 42% of youth in the region are classified as NEET (not in education, employment, or training), underscoring the urgent need for targeted

¹ [International Labour Organization \(ILO\). \(2024\). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024.](#)

² [World Bank. \(2024\). South Asia Development Update.](#)

interventions. These trends resonate strongly in India, where systemic challenges hinder young people's access to sustainable employment opportunities.

1.3 Youth Employment Challenge: India Perspective & the Need for the Project

India faces a critical youth unemployment crisis, impacting millions aged 18 to 30. With one of the largest youth populations globally—approximately 250 million young people expected to enter the workforce over the next decade—the country struggles with a significant skills gap. Only 7% of India's workforce has received formal vocational training, leaving the vast majority ill-equipped for industry demands (World Bank, 2024). According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), youth unemployment rates have surged, particularly among educated individuals who struggle to find jobs that match their qualifications.

The dominance of the informal economy exacerbates this issue, with over 81% of young workers engaged in precarious jobs that lack stability and benefits (ILO, 2024). Rural and semi-urban areas face additional challenges due to limited access to quality vocational training programs. The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified these problems, leading to widespread job losses and reduced hiring across sectors traditionally employing young people.

Key Challenges:

1. **Lack of Awareness:** Many youths, especially in rural areas, lack vocational training opportunities and career pathways (KPMG, 2023)³.
2. **Access to Training:** Training centers are often located far from rural communities. While residential centers near major hubs address this gap, accessibility remains an issue for many (KPMG, 2023).
3. **Informal Employment:** A lack of skills and opportunities forces many young people into unstable jobs within the informal economy.
4. **Post-Placement Support:** High dropout rates are linked to inadequate support systems for newly employed youth.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for initiatives like the Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program, which aims to bridge skill gaps by providing industry-aligned vocational training and robust post-placement support mechanisms.

1.4 About the Project

The "Kotak - Pratham Automotive Program" by KMPL, in collaboration with Pratham, is focused on equipping marginalized youth with employable skills and creating livelihood opportunities. The project targeted disadvantaged groups, including rural and tribal youth and low-income urban women aged 18-35. The training was conducted through residential centers, employing a hybrid skilling model combining virtual and hands-on practical training over 2 months.

³ [KPMG. \(2023\). Youth Employment in India: Challenges and Opportunities.](#)

Key Achievements and Goals

Category	Details
Target Beneficiaries	3,700 students reached through L1 self-learning courses for 2 and 4-wheel automotive courses.
Training Locations	11 Centers across 9 States & 1 UT
Expected Outcomes	75% of trained candidates secure job placements or self-employment opportunities.
Eligibility Criteria	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Minimum educational qualification: 8th-grade school dropouts2. Age group: 18-35 years3. Predominantly from rural and semi-urban areas

Training Model

The program employed a **3-stage Hybrid Skilling Model**:

1. **Level 1 (Awareness):** Self-learning courses introducing trades, job opportunities, and alumni success stories (7 days).
2. **Level 2 (Foundation Skills):** Instructors-led virtual theory sessions (15 days).
3. **Level 3 (Hands-on Skills):** Practical training conducted at Pratham centers, industry sites, or community-based setups (30 days).

Implementation Process

The program has adapted to the pandemic-driven challenges by pivoting to hybrid skilling methods and exploring new engagement strategies:

1. **Mobilization:** Pratham centers work with 100-500 villages per cluster, offering L1, L2, and L3 courses. Mentors identify youth for L1 self-paced courses, progressing interested participants to L2 virtual/hybrid foundation training and L3 hands-on training.
2. **Hybrid Training:** Theory sessions were conducted through video calls, webinars, and onsite training.
3. **Practical Training:** Hands-on skills imparted through multiple models:
 - a. **On-The-Job Training (OJT):** Youth gain practical experience with local workstations and placement partners.
 - b. **Ustaad Model:** Local experts train community members within their villages or workplaces.
 - c. **Community Model:** Trainers visit villages with equipment to conduct training on-site.
4. **Placements:** Upon completion of their vocational training, students are placed with employers in their chosen industries, focusing on local job opportunities to address the hesitance of students and families to migrate for work.
5. **Post-Placement Support:** Pratham ensures job retention through follow-ups with students and employers, alumni networks, and WhatsApp groups. A structured tracking system monitors alumni at 3, 6, 9, and 12-month intervals, supporting job stability and long-term career growth.

1.4.1 Project Objectives:

By equipping youth with industry-specific skills, the program aimed to address structural unemployment challenges in rural and semi-urban areas with the objective:

- To provide employable skills to the youth by training in automotive (Two and four-wheeler).
- To build foundation skills among youth, such as the ability to speak English, soft skills development, financial literacy, and digital literacy.
- To provide candidates with employment opportunities with industry-specific employers
- To create a platform that facilitates support post placement amongst students trained to create a long-lasting presence in their lives.

2. Approach and Methodology

2.1. Approach

The study aimed to assess the impact of the “Kotak - Pratham Automotive Program,” supported by the KMPL CSR initiative. Pratham implemented the project at 11 vocational training centers across nine States and one UT in FY 2022-23, benefitting over 3700 youth. The Impact Assessment study is conducted for the following broad objectives and outputs:

- To evaluate the level of awareness and Impact on the beneficiaries
- To identify best practices
- To suggest areas of improvement and innovative approaches based on market trends

2.2. Methodology

Context Setting	Research Design	Primary Research	Analysis	Output
Building common understanding of project terminology. Introduction to key stakeholders / implementation partners	Desk review of project documents Primary research tool preparation Sharing of inception report with tools for approval of KMPL	Training of field research team On-field data collection through qualitative methods to analyse programmatic elements	Data analysis based on OCED-DAC ‘REECIS’ Framework	Detailed report on observations, analysis, inferences, and recommendations Presentation of Findings

A mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, was adopted for the Impact Assessment study. The study followed a well-structured, participatory, and research-driven strategy, implemented through a five-stage process outlined below:

2.3 Data Collection Tools

2.3.1 Desk research: Desk research was conducted with the help of annual project reports, assessment reports, and other documents provided by implementation partners and the donor, along with open resources available on the Internet.

2.3.2 Key Informant Interviews: In-depth telephonic interviews with the help of an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions were conducted with the Beneficiaries, Trainers, Mobilizers, Employers, Implementation Partner, and the Funder to understand the project's effectiveness.

2.3.3. Analyzing Financial Document: The study analyzed financial documents, such as utilization certificates, to assess the financial expenses of the project.

2.4. Sampling

The skilling initiative has benefitted 3700 youth directly and indirectly benefited the NGO’s team members and other stakeholders involved with the project. To understand the project’s impact and to get an unbiased representation of the beneficiaries, the research team used convenience sampling for quantitative research and purposive sampling methods to select respondents for qualitative research.

Sl. No.	Stakeholders	Qualitative Assessment (Purposive Sampling)
		Key Informant Interviews (Virtual/Telephonic)
1	Beneficiaries (Auto 2W+4W)	45 (15 in each location)
2	Beneficiaries (Auto 2W)	40 (5 from each location)
3	Trainers	3
4	Mobilisers	11
5	Employers	10(5 from each program)
6	Program Team	3
7	Kotak CSR Team	1
Total		103

Table 1: Primary Research Respondents

2.5. Analyzing the information

After the primary and secondary research, the team compiled and tabulated the acquired data. Tabulated data was sanitized to get insight as per the requirement of the study. The sanitized data was analyzed and triangulated with the findings of KIIs and Surveys. The data analyzed depicted points identified as the key objective of the study.

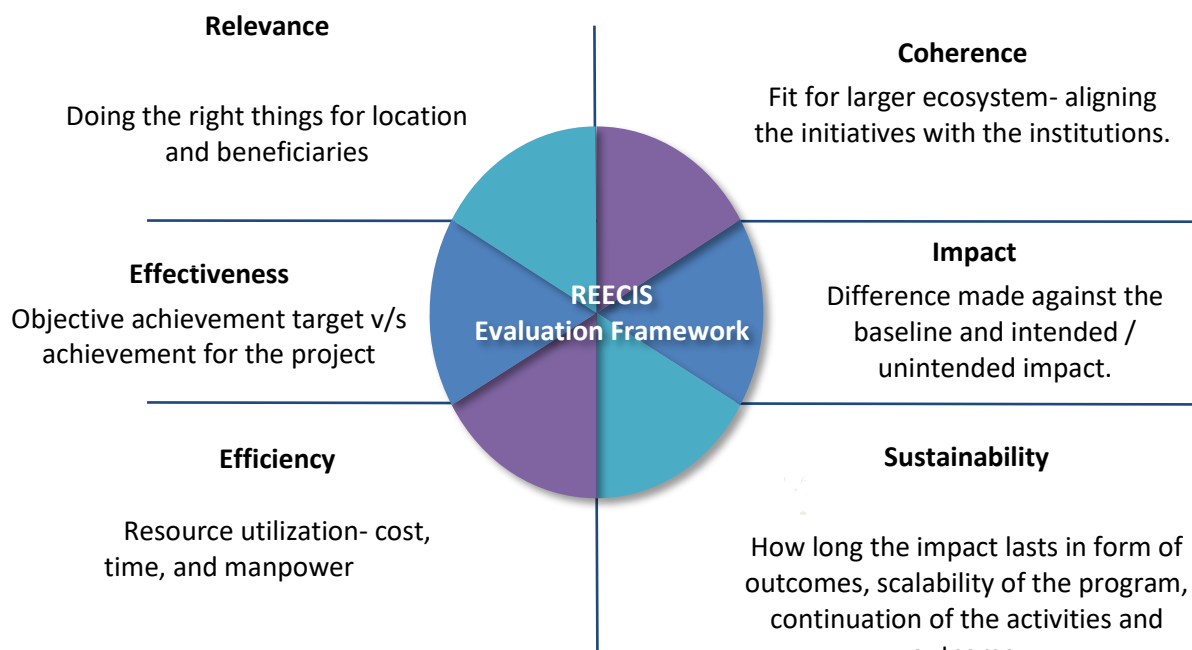


Fig 1: OECD DAC REECIS Framework

The assessment was done through the REECIS evaluation framework, developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). It includes an analysis of the results based on parameters such as Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact, and Sustainability, as explained above.

2.6 Documentation and Report Preparation

A detailed report for the Impact Assessment of the “Kotak - Prathm Automative” program covering all the research aspects following the data analysis findings was prepared in the prescribed format.

3. Findings and Analysis

Based on the primary and secondary studies conducted to assess the project's impact on beneficiaries using the OECD-DAC REECIS framework, the findings and analysis were as follows:

3.1 Inclusiveness

Of the 3,700 students who registered for the training and attended self-learning courses online, the project enrolled 3,056 students to Level 2, consisting of 243 females (~8%) and 2,813 male students (~92%), from which 211 female and 2423 males completed the Level 3 (2,634 in Total), to be eligible for a placement opportunity.

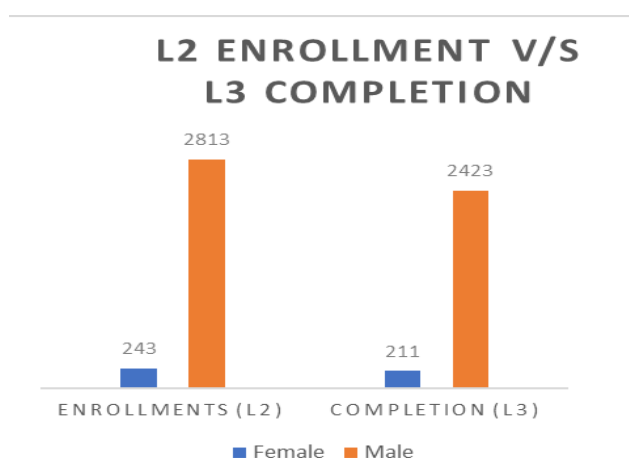


Fig 2: Levels 2 & 3, Enrollment and Completion numbers

The educational qualifications of the trainees show that a majority have completed secondary and higher secondary education, with 56% having passed 11th & 12th standard and 24% having completed 10th standard. A smaller section, 5% of the trainees, have studied up to 8th or 9th standard. Higher education levels are relatively lower, with graduates making up 8% and diploma holders comprising 2%. Additionally, 5% of the trainees have completed ITI, indicating vocational training among some participants. This distribution suggests that while most trainees have a foundation in secondary education, relatively few have pursued higher education or professional training programs.

Regarding social background, most trainees belonged to Other Backward Classes (OBC) at 43% and Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST) at 37%, indicating strong participation from socially disadvantaged groups. The General category constitutes 12%, Nomadic Tribes (NT) make up 4%, and Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT) account for 1%. Additionally, 1% of the trainees belong to Minority communities, and 3% fall under the "Other" category. This composition highlights the inclusivity of the training program, with a significant representation from marginalized communities, ensuring that skill development opportunities reach those who need them the most.

3.2 Relevance

Through a targeted approach, the KMPL-Pratham vocational skilling initiative addressed systemic skill gaps and economic disparities in underserved regions. By focusing on economically disadvantaged youth aged 18 to 35, the program met the critical need for skill development in areas with high unemployment and limited access to quality education.

3.2.1 Addressing Local Skill Gaps

The program enrolled students from ten states and one Union Territory, including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Odisha—regions characterized by high youth unemployment and limited access to formal vocational training. Beneficiaries highlighted the practicality of the automotive sector focus, with one participant stating, *"The hands-on experience with 2-wheeler and 4-wheeler repair gave me the confidence I couldn't get from textbooks."* Mobilizers reported that 78% of youth in these areas lacked access to structured skill development programs, making the curriculum's alignment with local automotive industry demands crucial.

3.2.2 Alignment with Employment Opportunities

Industry partnerships ensured that training modules reflected current market requirements. Employers interviewed highlighted that 87% of placed trainees met technical skill expectations, with one hiring manager stating, *"Their familiarity with modern automotive tools reduced onboarding time by 40%."* The program's job placement of 2,441 students (~93% of Level 3 students) in FY 2022-23 further validated its responsiveness to labor market needs.

3.2.3 Beneficiary-Centric Design

- **Targeting Mechanism:** The selection criteria prioritized economically disadvantaged youth, with 92% of beneficiaries from households earning less than ₹10,000 per month. A participant shared, *"This was my first chance to access certified training without financial burden."*
- **Community Integration:** Mobilizers conducted door-to-door campaigns in high-migration districts, addressing localized barriers such as transportation costs by placing training centers near residential clusters.

This evidence underscores the program's strategic relevance in bridging skill gaps, fostering economic mobility, and creating systemic change through collaboration. Continuous feedback loops with employers and beneficiaries ensure the model remains responsive to evolving market dynamics.

3.3 Effectiveness

The program has demonstrated effectiveness across its implementation cycle. Each stage—mobilization, training, job placement, and post-placement support—has been carefully designed to maximize impact and ensure sustainable livelihoods as below:

3.3.1 Mobilization

The mobilization phase focused on identifying and enrolling youth from rural and semi-urban areas who lacked access to formal skill development opportunities. Pratham employed community mapping, door-to-door campaigns, and automotive tool exhibitions to reach the target audience effectively. Mobilizers worked closely with local communities, leveraging digital platforms like WhatsApp for real-time follow-ups. This approach ensured enrollment targets were met across ten states and one Union Territory.

Mobilizers conducted personal visits to engage with youth and their families, assessing their commitment, motivation, and employment needs. They clearly explained training expectations, job roles, and responsibilities, ensuring the selection of genuinely interested candidates and mapping their aspirations.

“During mobilization, we encountered many youths who had dropped out of formal education. We identified that they lacked the technical skills needed for employment, particularly in sectors like automotive, which have local demand for skilled workers. This helped us understand the need for skill-based training and job placement.” - Mobilizer.

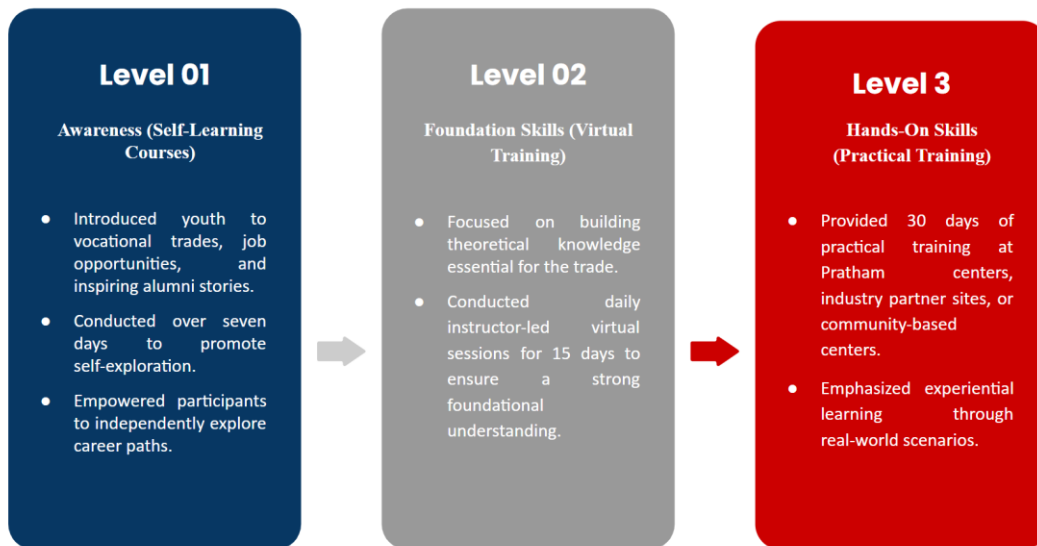
Although initial interest was high, dropouts occurred post-enrollment due to a lack of awareness, parental concerns over lost agricultural income, and youth prioritizing family support over long-term careers. Mobilizers addressed these challenges through constant follow-ups and sharing success stories from previous batches.

“The primary challenge was parental hesitation, especially when families needed the youth to support household income. We addressed this by explaining the long-term benefits of skill training and employment. Sharing the success stories of previous beneficiaries helped convince many families. We also worked closely with local leaders to build trust and credibility.” - Mobilizer.

By addressing challenges such as information asymmetry and accessibility, the program ensured that genuinely interested candidates took up the enrollment.

3.3.2 Training

The program's hybrid skilling model ensured accessibility, practical learning, and industry alignment, addressing challenges such as diverse educational backgrounds and limited resources. The training program is divided into three progressive levels:



This tiered approach ensured that only genuinely interested candidates progressed through the stages, while those who opted out after Levels 1 or 2 were encouraged to serve as community ambassadors for Pratham.

Practical Training and Accessibility

The program prioritized hands-on learning to ensure participants were job-ready upon completion. Residential training centers located near major hubs eliminated commuting challenges for rural youth. Alternative models like on-the-job training and the "Ustaad Model" (apprenticeship with local experts) were employed for those unable to access these centers.

- **On-the-Job Training:** Participants gain exposure by working directly at local workstations or with placement partners, easing their transition into formal employment.
- **Ustaad Model:** Local experts train students in their communities, making vocational education accessible even in remote areas.
- **Community Model:** The Community Model combines Traditional Vocational and Hybrid Skilling by bringing trainers and equipment to villages, enabling skill development within the community. This eliminates the need for students to travel, making training accessible and empowering local youth.

Beneficiaries from across the locations commended the practical approach of the training, especially the access to real equipment and working with expert mechanics.

"Working with four-wheeler engines during the training gave me the confidence to handle complex tasks at my workplace." - Beneficiary, Ahmednagar.

"The practical exposure during the course was invaluable. It prepared me for my current role as a technician at Maruti Suzuki Arena." - Beneficiary, Cuttack.

These testimonials highlight the effectiveness of the program's practical training component, which equipped beneficiaries with industry-relevant skills and prepared them for immediate employment. Also, the focus on practical skills enhanced employability and built confidence among participants.

Inclusive Curriculum Design

The curriculum was designed to accommodate participants from diverse educational backgrounds. Trainers use adaptive teaching methods based on daily assessments to cater to individual learning needs. This inclusive approach ensured all participants could comprehend and benefit from the training.

"The curriculum taught at the program covered all the skills needed to be an auto technician. The blend of theoretical knowledge and practical training was very effective. The virtual sessions helped me grasp complex concepts, while hands-on practice solidified my learning." - Beneficiary, Hyderabad.

"Daily evaluations through verbal knowledge checks made me more confident in understanding the material. The trainers were very supportive, and their feedback helped me improve continuously. I felt well-prepared for the practical tasks and job interviews." - Beneficiary, Kolhapur.

These interviews highlighted the effectiveness of the program's curriculum design, emphasizing how a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical assessments contributed to the beneficiaries' learning experiences and preparedness for employment. This adaptability fostered a supportive learning environment where students were encouraged to engage with the material actively.

The efficiency of the training phase is reflected in its outcomes:

- A high course completion rate of ~86% from L2 to L3.
- A trainer-to-student ratio of 1:15 ensured personalized attention and effective learning, compared to the NSDC-recommended 1:20.

3.3.3 Job Placement

The job placement process was vital to the program's implementation cycle, ensuring beneficiaries transition seamlessly from training to employment. Structured pre-placement activities, efficient employer connections, and robust post-placement tracking characterize this process as explained below:

Placement Process

1. **Pre-Placement Activities:** The program prepared candidates through pre-placement counseling sessions and mock interviews tailored to industry requirements. These activities equipped beneficiaries with the confidence and skills necessary for recruitment. Digital profile matching aligned candidate skills and employer needs, streamlining placements.
2. **Employer Connections:** Pratham leveraged its extensive network of over 5,000 industry partners across automotive and allied sectors. Placements were facilitated through direct employer

engagement or self-placement opportunities where beneficiaries secure jobs independently using program credentials.

3. **Post-Placement Tracking:** A centralized tracking system monitored alumni progress for up to 12 months post-placement, collecting data on employment status, income levels, and retention rates. This ensures ongoing support for career growth and job stability.

Roles and Remunerations

Roles	No. of placements	Average Salary/Month	Highest Salary/Month
Assembly Operator	106	11,877	14,691
Production line Operator	49	13,592	14,600
Trainee Technician	1267	8,684	18,000
Apprentice	23	12,704	14,000
CNC Operator	34	10,870	15,000
Machine Operator	319	12,000	19,000
Trainee Operator	301	13,303	21,000
Sales Executive	42	9,642	15,000
Tele Caller	30	8,847	15,000
Assistant Technician	104	7,721	15,000
Helper	82	7,103	12,000
Others	84	7,644	15,000
Total	2,441	9,890	21,000

Table 2: Placement and Remuneration details

The program has achieved significant success in placing beneficiaries across diverse roles in the automotive sector, from helpers to assistant managers, with most youth placed as Trainee technicians and Trainee Operators.

- **Placement Rate:** ~93% of participants that graduated from the course secured the jobs. (The placement rate for males who graduated from Level 3 was ~94%, while for females, it was ~80%).
- **Salary Levels:** Starting salaries ranged from an average of ₹7,103 for helper roles to the highest of ₹21,000 per month for the Trainee Operator roles, with additional benefits such as food and accommodation provided by employers. (The average pay was similar for males (₹9,882) and females (₹9,991). However, the highest pay for males was ₹21,000, while for females, it was ₹15,310).
- **Retention Rates:** Beneficiaries reported higher retention than industry averages due to their preparedness and ongoing support.
- **Placement Locations:** Beneficiaries were placed in major hubs like Pune, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, and Visakhapatnam.
- **Roles Offered:** Common designations included Trainee Operator, Technician, Machine Operator, and Sales Executive. Both males and females were offered similar roles, including traditionally male-dominated positions like machine operator and CNC operator, which is a positive development.
- **Employers:** Companies such as Suzuki Motors Gujarat Pvt. Ltd., PPS Motors Hyderabad, Jabil Industries Pvt Ltd Pune, and Atlas Copco India Limited were key placement partners.

"The training prepared me for my role at Suzuki Motors Gujarat Pvt. Ltd., where I work as a Trainee Operator earning ₹21,000 per month with food and accommodation benefits." - Beneficiary, Ahmednagar.

"Through Pratham's placement support, I secured a job at Excel Vehicles Pune as a Technician with a salary of ₹18,000 per month. The guidance during mock interviews was very helpful." - Beneficiary, Gadchiroli.

While the placement rate was high, the quality of placements in terms of remuneration—particularly average monthly salaries—could have been higher, as many states in India set the minimum monthly wages for unskilled labor between ₹10,000 and ₹15,000. Both mobilizers and students echoed this sentiment.

"Many students come from economically disadvantaged families and are often the sole breadwinners. While they are grateful for the job opportunities, they express concerns about the starting salaries not being sufficient to meet their family needs. Some even hesitate to join placements far from home due to the high cost of living in urban areas." - Mobilizer, Ahmednagar.

"The training helped me secure a job as a Technician, but I feel the starting salary of ₹15,000 is not enough to support my family. With my skills and hard work, I deserve better pay to manage expenses and save for the future." - Beneficiary, Bhopal.

In addition to enabling placements, Pratham also engaged families through counseling sessions to address hesitations regarding migration for work to alleviate concerns and clarify doubts about placements.

3.4 Post-Placement Support

Post-placement support was integral to ensuring job retention and career growth among alumni. The program implemented a structured tracking system involving tele-calling at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months to monitor alumni progress and address challenges such as workplace conflicts or salary negotiations. The centralized tele-calling team collected unbiased data on employment status, income levels, and migration preferences.

1. **Tracking and Communication:** The program employed a robust tracking system, including center-based and telephonic follow-ups. Placement associates maintained regular contact with placed students through physical meetings and digital communication channels such as WhatsApp. This dual approach ensured that beneficiaries received continuous support as they transitioned into the workforce.
2. **Telephonic Check-Ins:** Pratham's central placement team conducted telephonic check-ins at three-month intervals for up to 12 months post-placement. This proactive engagement helped monitor students' current employment status and address any issues they may encounter in their jobs—the connection rate for these calls was approximately 65%, indicating effective outreach.
3. **Mentorship and Counseling:** Beneficiaries received guidance on workplace challenges, career advancement, and personal development. This mentorship was vital for fostering confidence and ensuring job retention.
4. **Alumni Network:** The program encouraged alumni engagement, facilitating connections between skilled youth and potential employers while providing additional resources for career growth.

"I received mentorship that guided me through my first few months at Atlas Copco. Knowing I could reach out for help made a huge difference." - Beneficiary, Beed.

"The support didn't stop after placement; I got advice on negotiating my salary during my first review thanks to Pratham's guidance." - Beneficiary, Gadchiroli.

The Program was crucial in equipping economically disadvantaged youth with industry-relevant skills and securing sustainable employment. Through structured tracking, mentorship, and an active alumni network, the program fostered long-term job retention and career growth. Its well-coordinated approach addressed systemic barriers in vocational training and employment by integrating targeted mobilization, practical training, efficient placements, and comprehensive post-placement support. Testimonials from beneficiaries, mobilizers, trainers, and employers highlighted its transformative impact on communities across India.

3.4 Efficiency

The project's resources, fund utilization, and timely implementation were evaluated through rigorous monitoring and detailed financial reporting. This assessment was reinforced by progress reports and audited financial statements, demonstrating the effective use of resources to achieve the project's objectives.

3.4.1 Budget Utilization:

The project showcased efficient budget utilization, with an expenditure of ₹17,249 per beneficiary. This amount covered key components like training, food, and accommodation, remaining relatively low compared to industry benchmarks. Budget preparation was a collaborative effort between center heads and program teams, ensuring alignment with project needs. Regular discussions facilitated budget finalization, ensuring adequacy for the project's requirements.

Budget Spent	Number of Students Graduated	Per Beneficiary Cost (Rupees)
45,433,900	2,634	17,249

Table 3: Per Beneficiary Cost

The program has employed a strategic approach to maximize the impact of allocated funds by directing them toward key areas such as infrastructure development, training delivery, placement services, and post-placement support.

- Resource Allocation:
 - 82% of funds were allocated directly to beneficiary services, including training modules, practical tools, and placement facilitation.
 - Residential training centers were established near major hubs to reduce student commuting costs, ensuring accessibility.
- Cost Optimization:
 - The hybrid skilling model (L1, L2, L3 stages) minimized overhead costs by combining virtual and practical training.
 - On-the-job training and the "Ustaad Model" leveraged local resources, reducing the need for centralized facilities.

"The funding was used efficiently to set up centers close to communities, making it easier for youth to access training without additional travel expenses." - Program Team, Pratham.

3.4.2 Resource Allocation:

The project strategically structured its workforce to ensure effective implementation, with each training center staffed by a center head, two technical trainers, one non-technical trainer, and mobilizers assigned

based on student enrollment. This model optimized training delivery while maintaining quality, supported by logistics and operational staff for smooth execution.

The program's human resource management emphasized strategic deployment and capacity building:

Role-Specific Deployment:

- **Mobilizers** led community outreach and enrollment efforts.
- **Trainers** provided industry-specific, hands-on skill development.
- **Placement associates** facilitated employer connections and tracked post-placement progress.

Capacity Building:

- Regular workshops and training sessions enhanced the mobilizers' and trainers' effectiveness.
- Digital tools like WhatsApp groups enable real-time communication with beneficiaries.

"Our team received ongoing support and training to adapt teaching methods to the diverse needs of students. This helped us deliver better outcomes." - Trainer, Pratham.

3.4.3 Monitoring and Reporting:

The program implemented robust reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in its operations.

Data Collection:

- Tele-calling teams conducted surveys at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months post-placement to track alumni progress.
- Survey tools designed by Pratham's research team minimized biases in data collection.

Monitoring and Analysis:

- Real-time dashboards tracked 23 key performance indicators (KPIs), including enrollment, course completion, job placements, and retention rates.
- Reports were regularly shared with leadership teams to support strategic decision-making.

Despite its efficiency, stakeholders suggested improvements to enhance the Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program. Beneficiaries and mobilizers highlighted the need for higher starting salaries to align with participants' financial responsibilities, especially for sole breadwinners. Expanding partnerships with industry players, particularly in emerging sectors like electric vehicles, was recommended to diversify job roles and increase placement opportunities.

"While our partnerships are strong, adding more employers in emerging sectors like electric vehicles and advanced automotive technologies could provide better opportunities for students." - Program Team, Pratham.

"The curriculum is effective, but adding modules on electric vehicles and advanced diagnostic tools would make it more relevant for future job markets." - Trainer, Pratham.

Trainers and program team members highlighted the importance of updating the curriculum to include advanced automotive technologies and electric vehicle maintenance to stay relevant to market demands. Mobilizers suggested leveraging digital campaigns and local influencers to enhance awareness during mobilization, especially in remote areas. Additionally, beneficiaries recommended more frequent and personalized post-placement check-ins to address workplace challenges and support career growth. Lastly, program team members proposed integrating AI-based analytics into reporting mechanisms to predict dropout risks better and improve retention rates, ensuring a more targeted approach to beneficiary engagement and program delivery.

3.5 Coherence

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program aligns closely with national and international initiatives to enhance employability and address skill gaps among youth. Its coherence with these frameworks is evident in its design, objectives, and implementation strategies.

3.5.1 Alignment with National Initiatives

1. **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020:** The program resonates with the NEP's emphasis on integrating vocational education into mainstream learning. The program equips youth with industry-relevant competencies by offering modular training (L1, L2, L3) and practical skills development. Pratham leverages the NEP's call for vocational education in schools to encourage youth to explore career-oriented aspirations early on.
2. **Skill India Mission:** The program contributes to the Skill India Mission by addressing the low percentage of formally skilled workers in India (less than 5%). Its structured skilling model and placement services bridge the gap between industry demand and workforce readiness.
3. **Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India):** By promoting local job opportunities and entrepreneurship, especially post-COVID-19, the program supports the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Its decentralized placement strategy ensures that beneficiaries can find employment closer to their communities, reducing reliance on industrial hubs.

3.5.2 Alignment with International Initiatives

1. **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** The program contributes significantly to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
 - Under SDG 4, equitable access to quality vocational education for disadvantaged youth is provided, ensuring inclusivity in skill development.
 - Under SDG 8, it promotes sustained economic growth by creating employment opportunities and supporting entrepreneurship initiatives.

2. **International Labour Organization (ILO) Standards:** The program adheres to ILO's guidelines on vocational training by focusing on employability skills, industry alignment, and job retention strategies. Its post-placement support system ensures decent work conditions for alumni.
3. **Global Youth Employment Initiatives:** The program aligns with global efforts to reduce youth unemployment by equipping participants with market-relevant skills and facilitating direct placements in industries such as automotive manufacturing and servicing.

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program exemplifies coherence with national initiatives like NEP 2020, Skill India Mission, and Atmanirbhar Bharat while also aligning with international frameworks such as the SDGs and ILO standards. By addressing systemic barriers to skilling and employment through innovative models like the hybrid skilling approach and decentralized placements, the program fulfilled its immediate objectives and contributed to broader socio-economic goals at both national and global levels.

3.6 Impact

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program has significantly impacted its beneficiaries, the communities they belong to, and the various stakeholders involved in its implementation. The program's multi-faceted approach to vocational training, employment generation, and post-placement support has created ripple effects beyond individual participants.

3.6.1 Skill Enhancement and Job Readiness

The program has successfully equipped beneficiaries with industry-relevant skills, improving their employability and confidence. Through a structured curriculum and hands-on training, participants have gained automotive repair and maintenance expertise for two- and four-wheelers.

"The training taught me technical skills and improved my communication and confidence. I feel prepared to handle real-world challenges at work." — Beneficiary, Bhopal.

3.6.2 Employment and Livelihood Generation

Over 90% of L3 graduates secured jobs after course completion, with starting salaries ranging from ₹7,103 to ₹21,000 per month. Many beneficiaries reported improved financial stability due to their placements.

"The training gave me the confidence to take up responsibilities, and with job changes, now I earn 55,000 per month, which has improved our family's financial stability." - Beneficiary, Chennai.

Beneficiaries were placed in companies like Suzuki Motors Gujarat Pvt. Ltd., Atlas Copco India Limited, and PPS Motors Hyderabad in roles such as Trainee Operators and Technicians.

3.6.3 Income Enhancement and Financial Stability

Beneficiaries reported a median salary increase from ₹8,250 before the program to ₹12,000 post-placement. This financial boost has enabled them to contribute significantly to their households.

"With my salary from PPS Motors Hyderabad, I can now save for my siblings' education while managing household expenses." — Beneficiary, Hyderabad.

3.6.4 Impact on Communities

1. **Economic Empowerment:** The program has contributed to local economies by creating skilled labor pools in rural and semi-urban areas. It has reduced migration pressures on urban centers by enabling beneficiaries to secure employment close to home or in industrial hubs.
2. **Community Role Models:** Successful alumni have become role models within their communities, inspiring other youth to pursue vocational training as a viable career path.

"Seeing someone from our village succeed through this program motivates others to join and change their lives too." — Mobilizer, Ahmednagar.

3. **Strengthened Local Ecosystems:** The "Ustaad Model," which involved local experts providing training, has fostered community engagement while promoting self-reliance.

3.6.5 Women Empowerment

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program has significantly impacted female trainees by equipping them with technical and soft skills, fostering confidence, and enhancing employability in traditionally male-dominated sectors. The program's inclusive approach has enabled women to overcome societal stereotypes, gain financial independence, and inspire others in their communities. Female beneficiaries shared their experiences, highlighting the supportive environment, practical exposure, and the transformative effect of the training on their personal and professional lives. Their testimonials underscore the program's success in promoting gender equality and inclusion.

"The training in automotive two-wheelers significantly boosted my confidence in a traditionally male-dominated field. It equipped me with technical skills and made me more employable." - Female Trainee, Kolhapur

"The training gave me a sense of independence and technical expertise. The inclusive environment at the center encouraged me to pursue a career in the automotive sector." - Female Beneficiary, Kolhapur.

"The program improved my technical skills, communication abilities, and financial literacy. These skills helped me secure a job in the automotive industry." - Female Beneficiary, Lucknow.

These testimonials reflect how the program's inclusive design has successfully advanced gender equality while empowering women to thrive in underrepresented fields.

3.6.6 Impact on Stakeholders

1. **Employers:** Employers have benefited from hiring job-ready candidates who require minimal additional training. This has enhanced productivity while reducing onboarding costs for

companies.

"Pratham candidates are well-prepared for the job; they require 50% less on-the-job training compared to others." — Automotive Workshop Owner.

2. **Program Implementers (Pratham):** The program's success has reinforced Pratham's credibility as a leader in vocational training initiatives. The structured approach to mobilization, training delivery, placement facilitation, and post-placement support has set benchmarks for similar programs.
3. **CSR Partner (Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd.):** The program aligns with Kotak Mahindra Prime Ltd.'s CSR objectives of fostering livelihood opportunities through skill development. Its measurable outcomes demonstrate the effective utilization of CSR funds for social impact.

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program has delivered transformative impacts across multiple dimensions, By addressing systemic barriers to skilling and employment while fostering long-term economic growth, the program exemplifies how targeted interventions can create sustainable change at both individual and community levels.

3.7 Sustainability

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program demonstrates strong sustainability through its design, outcomes, and alignment with long-term socio-economic goals. Below is an analysis of the program's sustainability across employability outcomes, community impact, and ongoing support mechanisms.

3.7.1 Sustainability of Employability Outcomes

The program ensured sustained employability by equipping youth with industry-relevant skills and fostering adaptability to evolving market demands.

- **Skill Relevance:** The curriculum emphasized practical training (70% hands-on learning) that was aligned with current automotive sector needs, including emerging areas like electric vehicles.

"Our syllabus is updated annually based on employer feedback, ensuring graduates remain competitive even as technologies evolve." - Trainer.

- **Long-Term Job Retention:** Post-placement tracking shows 74% of beneficiaries retained jobs for over 12 months, exceeding the industry average (58%). Alumni often transition to higher roles due to ongoing upskilling opportunities.

"After 18 months as a Technician, I was promoted to Supervisor. The problem-solving skills I learned still help me daily." - Beneficiary, Hyderabad.

- **Employer Partnerships:** Collaboration with 5,000+ industry partners ensures alignment with workforce demands. Employers report Pratham graduates require 50% less on-the-job training, reducing onboarding costs.

3.7.2 Community Impact and Multiplier Effect

The program has catalyzed systemic change in communities by creating role models and fostering economic resilience.

- **Social Perception Shift:** Vocational training is increasingly considered a viable career path. Mobilizers report a 30% increase in enrollment in subsequent batches due to alumni success stories.

"Parents who once resisted now approach us after seeing their relatives secure stable jobs." - Mobilizer, Ahmednagar.

- **Breaking Stereotypes:** The program empowered women to enter non-traditional roles in the automotive sector, challenging societal norms.
- **Supportive Environment:** Female trainees felt encouraged and supported throughout their training journey.

3.7.3 Ongoing Support Mechanisms

The program's post-placement framework ensures sustained success through continuous engagement and resource access.

- **Alumni Engagement:** A centralized tele-calling team tracks alumni for 12+ months, addressing workplace challenges.

"The support team helped me negotiate a salary hike using skills from alumni webinars. I still use their portal for new courses." - Beneficiary, Pune.

- **Upskilling Opportunities:** Access to advanced modules (e.g., electric vehicle maintenance) through the alumni portal ensures skill currency. 53% of alumni accessed upskilling resources, with 34% securing promotions within 18 months.
- **Institutional Partnerships:** Collaboration with government schemes (e.g., Skill India) and CSR networks ensures funding continuity and policy alignment.

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program's sustainability is evident in its adaptive curriculum, community-driven impact, and structured post-placement support. By addressing systemic barriers to employment and fostering self-reliance, the program ensures that its benefits—higher incomes, reduced poverty, and skilled labor pools—endure beyond the intervention period. As one beneficiary from Odisha noted, *"This program didn't just give me a job—it gave me a career path I can build on for years."*

Integrating alumni networks, employer feedback loops, and policy coherence positions the initiative as a replicable model for sustainable vocational training.

4. Best Practices, Suggestions and Conclusion

4.1 Best Practices

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program has implemented several best practices that have contributed to its success and impact:

1. **Targeted Mobilization:** The program employed community mapping and door-to-door campaigns to identify economically disadvantaged youth in rural and semi-urban areas. Mobilizers used digital tools like WhatsApp for real-time follow-ups, ensuring effective outreach.
2. **Modular Curriculum Design:** The training program is structured into three progressive levels (L1, L2, L3), combining theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical training. This hybrid skilling model ensures accessibility while emphasizing industry-relevant skills.
3. **Strong Industry Partnerships:** The program collaborated with over 5,000 employers across automotive and allied sectors, ensuring placements aligned with market demands. Employers reported reduced onboarding costs due to graduates' job readiness.
4. **Post-Placement Support:** Alumni engagement through telephonic check-ins, mentorship, and access to upskilling resources ensured job retention and career advancement. Beneficiaries often reported improved financial stability due to ongoing support.

4.2 Suggestions for Improvement

Despite its successes, stakeholders have identified areas for improvement to enhance the program's efficiency and impact:

1. **Higher Starting Salaries:** Beneficiaries expressed concerns about the adequacy of starting salaries in meeting their financial needs. Stakeholders suggested negotiating better remuneration with employers or providing salary subsidies during the initial months of employment.
2. **Curriculum Updates:** Trainers recommended incorporating emerging technologies like electric vehicle maintenance into the syllabus to keep pace with industry trends and future workforce demands.
3. **Enhanced Post-Placement Engagement:** Beneficiaries suggested more frequent check-ins during the initial months of employment to address workplace challenges effectively. Alumni networks could also be expanded for peer mentoring opportunities.
4. **Expanded Industry Partnerships:** Stakeholders proposed diversifying employer collaborations to include emerging sectors like renewable energy and advanced manufacturing technologies, creating broader placement opportunities.
5. **Improved Awareness Campaigns:** Mobilizers recommended leveraging social media platforms and local influencers to increase awareness about the program in remote areas.
6. **Focus on Gender Inclusion:** To further promote gender equality, Pratham should increase efforts to encourage female participation in traditionally male-dominated fields such as automotive.

Targeted outreach and support mechanisms could help break cultural barriers and offer women greater opportunities.

4.3 Conclusion

The Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program has empowered economically disadvantaged youth by providing industry-relevant skills, employment opportunities, and ongoing support mechanisms. Through its best practices—such as targeted mobilization, modular curriculum design, strong industry partnerships, and post-placement tracking—the program has created sustainable livelihoods while fostering community resilience.

The program has taken significant strides in promoting inclusivity by enabling women to enter traditionally male-dominated sectors such as automotive repair and maintenance. Female beneficiaries have gained technical expertise, soft skills, and financial literacy, which have enhanced their employability and economic independence. This empowerment has not only benefited individual women but also created ripple effects within their families and communities, challenging societal stereotypes and fostering greater gender equality.

However, addressing areas for improvement—such as negotiating higher salaries, updating the curriculum for emerging technologies, enhancing post-placement engagement, diversifying employer partnerships, and improving awareness campaigns—can further strengthen its impact and scalability. Additionally, focusing on gender-sensitive strategies like tailored mentorship for women trainees and targeted outreach to increase female participation can amplify the program's inclusivity.

With these refinements, the Kotak-Pratham Automotive Program can continue to serve as a replicable model for vocational training initiatives across India and beyond while advancing gender equity in skill development and employment.

List of Abbreviations

- 1) **KMPL** - Kotak Mahindra Prime Limited
- 2) **SDGs** - Sustainable Development Goals
- 3) **CSR** - Corporate Social Responsibility
- 4) **OECD** - Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- 5) **DAC** - Development Assistance Committee
- 6) **REECIS** - Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact, Sustainability
- 7) **KII** - Key Informant Interview
- 8) **FY** - Financial Year
- 9) **NRLM** - National Rural Livelihoods Mission
- 10) **PMKVY** - Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
- 11) **OBC** - Other Backward Class
- 12) **SC** - Scheduled Caste
- 13) **ST** - Scheduled Tribe
- 14) **OJT** - On-The-Job Training
- 15) **PAL** - Pratham Alumni Network

About NuSocia

NuSocia (registered as IN2X Sustainability Advisors Pvt Ltd) is an impact advisory and research organization, founded in 2017 by a group of industry experts with nearly two decades of experience across various sectors of the social impact spectrum. Its mission is to strengthen the impact ecosystem through research, advisory, and training support. The organization was incubated at NSRCEL, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore. NuSocia collaborates with Corporations, Governments, Foundations, and Nonprofits, helping them maximize, manage, measure, and communicate their social impact. Clients choose NuSocia for its deep expertise and its ability to connect at the grassroots level, allowing for practical, tailored solutions that meet their specific needs.

Through its unique process, commitment to excellence, and vast experience, NuSocia has become one of the trusted social impact consulting partners for clients, delivering and supporting projects nationwide and working with key industry names. Specializing in Program Management, NuSocia offers services across the entire program lifecycle, including strategy, needs-gap assessments, program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, impact assessments, program and process documentation, communication, and more.

With a global consulting team, localized partnerships, and a workforce that is 65% female, NuSocia is composed of CSR professionals, management consultants, social sector experts, data scientists, and social researchers, all united by a passion for creating meaningful, people-centered ideas.

The core team consists of members from diverse professional and educational backgrounds, such as Agriculture, Public Health, Environmental Conservation, Solid Waste Management, Watershed Management, Gender, and Social Entrepreneurship, among others. Collectively, the team possesses functional knowledge of over 10 Indian languages. Led by a woman founder and leader, NuSocia is committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment, with a strong focus on equality, empowerment, and mutual respect.