

Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras

An initiative by the Commissionerate of Employment and
Training, Government of Gujarat

Pioneering a flexible approach to skill development in rural Gujarat



December 2013

Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras (KVK)

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Context

The rapid growth of population in India is coupled with a unique demographic transition. Because of declining birth rates and improved life expectancy, India will witness a continuous rise in the working age population (in the 15–64 age bracket) over the next decade. Until 2020, the growth rate of working age population in India will exceed that of the total population¹. This unique 20 to 25 years' window of opportunity termed as the 'demographic dividend' forms the basis of skill development policy in India. The 12th five year plan of Government of India emphasizes the importance of vocational training and skill development to reap the full potential of the demographic dividend and build a skilled workforce in the near future. The National Skill Development Policy (NSDP), 2009 envisions empowering all individuals through improved skills, knowledge, nationally and internationally recognized qualifications to gain access to decent employment and ensure India's competitiveness in the global market.

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

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

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

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

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

Skill training scenario in Gujarat

The growth of engineering, agro & food processing, chemicals, automobile and other industry sectors offers tremendous employment opportunities in Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat has set up a Commissionerate of Employment and Training (CET) to facilitate vocational training and other skill development programs which are responsive to the industry needs. CET has set a target of imparting skill training to 5.4 million youth by 2017³. To strengthen the vocational training sector, the Government of Gujarat has embarked upon several initiatives including revamping existing ITIs, establishing new ITIs, setting up of Superior Technology Centers (STC), and introducing special training programs in emerging sectors like information technology (IT).

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

With all these initiatives, Gujarat has already made huge strides in the skill development sector. Increasing the enrollment of women in vocational training programs, however still needs a major policy boost. According to the FICCI Skill Report published in 2012⁴:

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

Women enrollment in the Gujarat ITIs is still low at 10%⁵ as in other states in the country. This can be attributed to a combination of geographical as well as socio-cultural factors. Most ITIs in the state as in most parts of the country are located in relatively bigger cities and towns. Several of these ITIs lack essential infrastructure such as toilets, canteens and separate accommodation facilities for women. Availability of safe and reliable public transport services from villages to these centers is also limited. Many families hence hesitate to send women to these training institutes. Moreover the ITIs offer courses that have a minimum duration of one year, which require women to be away from their homes and families for longer periods of time. The timings, schedule and curriculum of the courses is also fixed. The relatively lower literacy levels among women also deter them from enrolling in vocational courses at ITI which have a strict minimum eligibility criterion of having completed 10th standard.

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

³ http://www.gidb.org/downloads/ms_sonal_mishra_gidb_seminar_sir_08082012.pdf

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

⁵ <http://www.itihimmatnagar.org/kvk.htm>

Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras

Inception

The Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras (KVK) program was conceived during the Chintan Shibir- the annual two-day meeting of Government of Gujarat held in Kutch in 2009. The foundation of the new program was based on promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship, especially among rural youth and women and creating a pool of skilled personnel as desired by the industries. The following strategies were laid out to ensure maximum participation of women and other disadvantaged groups such as school dropouts, minorities and lower income families:

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

Based on the above strategies, the 'WISH' concept was devised for Kaushalya Vardhan Kendras focusing on women oriented courses, industry oriented courses, soft skill and service sector related courses and hard core traditional courses. The CET decided to start KVK centers on a pilot basis in 150 towns and villages with a population greater than 10,000 (7,000 in tribal areas). Villages which had no vocational training facilities within close proximity were prioritized. (Refer exhibit 1). A budget of Rs. 83.96 Crores was earmarked for the initiative for the first year. (See Exhibit 2)

Institutional arrangements

The KVK program was designed to utilize existing institutional arrangements and government infrastructure and build upon the robust network of ITIs in the state. An Assistant Director, CET was given charge of the program. The Principal of the district level ITI was designated as the Skill Development Officer (SDO) responsible for implementing the KVK program in the district. A new position of a KVK Coordinator was instituted to head the KVK. The SDO and the KVK coordinator identified available government buildings such as schools, panchayat structures or other buildings available on rent to start the KVK centers. The buildings were upgraded with essential infrastructure and equipment according to the guidelines provided by CET. A surrounding area of 5-7 km comprising 6-7 villages was identified as the catchment area for the KVK. To encourage participation from local leaders, gram panchayat members, industrial associations and village elders in program design and implementation, the CET asked Kaushalya Vardhan Samitis to be constituted under the chairmanship of the SDO. The KVK coordinator was designated as the member secretary of the committee. Other suggested members in the Samiti included the principal of the primary/ high school, representative of rural labour office, village computer entrepreneur (VCE), multipurpose health workers etc. (See Exhibit2).



Institutional arrangements for KVK

The role of the samitis was defined to include providing inputs in course design, organizing kaushalya sabhas, mobilizing the village community to join KVKs, running awareness campaigns, providing linkages with industry and encouraging employment and self employment.

Participatory approach to program design

CET decided to introduce at least four short term courses (2 months) at each KVK based on local needs, skill levels and aspirations based on the 'WISH' concept. The course structure and curriculum was adapted from the courses being offered at the ITIs.

The SDO and the KVK coordinator with support from Kaushalya Vardhan Samiti members organized Kaushalya Sabhas in all villages within the catchment area. The Kaushalya Sabhas provide a platform for the KVK coordinators to interact with training seekers and other interested groups to arrive at decisions regarding type of courses, time schedules, and infrastructure requirements for a KVK. Once the courses were identified, teachers from nearby ITIs in the district were deputed as faculty at the KVKs.

Popular courses included computer fundamentals, tally software, basic welding, electric wireman, beauty and make-up, hair dressing, tailoring and garment stitching, domestic appliance repairing, mobile repairing, plumbing, and motor driving and were introduced in majority of KVKs. Examples of area/ region specific courses include spoken English, gem and jewelry designing, fiber boat making, fish handling and preservation and making fishing crafts and gear.



Kaushalya Sabha in progress at Manipur village in the Godhavi cluster

Awareness campaigning and social mobilization

The SDO, KVK coordinator and samiti members conducted awareness campaigns in villages to inform the youth and women about the concept of KVK and the variety of courses offered. Canvassing methods included meetings at local schools, panchayat meetings staging street plays, folk theater and signages and information boards at ITIs important crossroads.



Awareness campaigning for KVKs

In order to increase enrolments from women, the KVK coordinator and staff conducted household visits, especially in villages and communities where literacy levels among women and social acceptability of women joining the workforce were observed to be low. The KVK faculty informed women and their families on the advantages of vocational education, explaining how learning new income-generating skills and activities could lead to improving their own and the families' economic status. The staff highlighted the flexibility offered by the KVKs in terms of course timings, schedules and curriculum which would allow them to undergo training while balancing their household responsibilities.

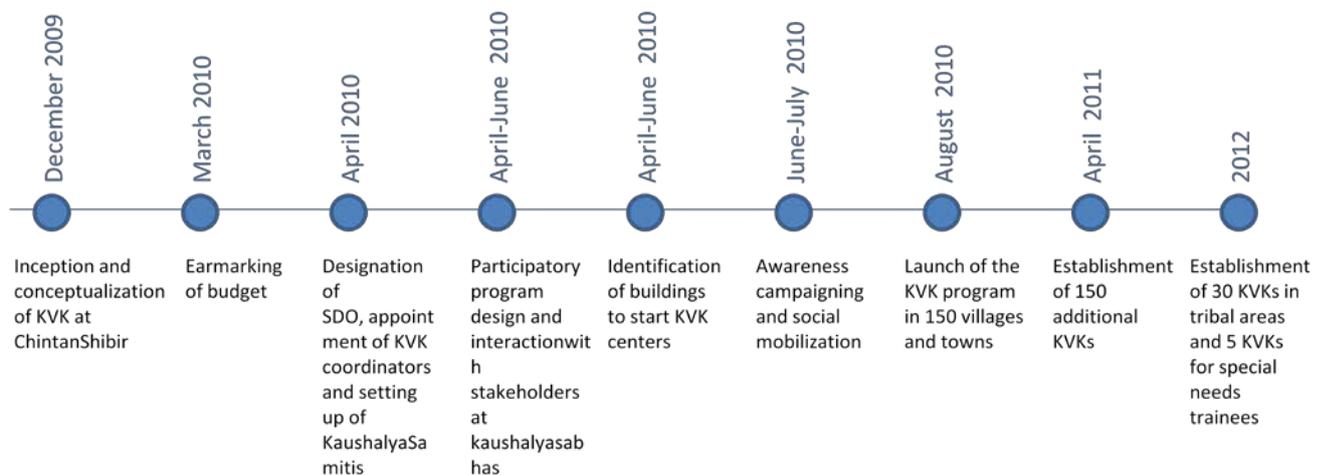


The KVK coordinator and faculty actively campaigned to enroll women in the training courses

Launch and current status

After six months of preparatory work including setting up of infrastructure and implementation framework, active campaigning and social mobilization, KVK was launched as a flagship scheme of the Commissionerate of Employment and Training on the 15th August 2010. Building up on the success of the program, additional 150 KVKs were launched in 2011 and another 35 in 2012. As of

December 2013, there are 335 KVKs that are functional in Gujarat. 120 of these are located in predominantly tribal areas.



KVK Timeline

Current modalities of KVK

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

455 short-term courses, with a duration varying from 40 to 576 hours are currently running in KVKs all across Gujarat. The trainees receive a formal certificate from Gujarat Council of Vocational Training on course completion. In addition, 1980 essential life skill courses such as pesticide spraying, making household items, playing musical instruments etc. are also offered in alignment with the 'WISH' concept. Each KVK runs a minimum of four courses with a batch size of 16-20 participants per course.

There is no age limit for admission and the minimum eligibility criteria vary from course to course. Admission is offered on producing a school leaving certificate. Those who cannot produce a certificate are admitted on the basis of an oral test. The courses at KVK are kept very affordable with a nominal fee of fifty rupees. Women, SC/ ST, physically handicapped and BPL trainees are admitted without any fee.

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

No new physical infrastructure has been established under the KVK program. All 330 centers are currently running in allotted space in schools, gram panchayat buildings, local colleges, markets and or private buildings which have been acquired on rent. The KVKs are equipped with all essential infrastructure including drinking water, separate toilets for men and women, benches and whiteboards in classrooms, computers and other machines and equipment as required for the courses. All KVKs are equipped with DTH connection for learning through Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG). An annual budget of Rs. 20-25 lakhs for non-recurring expenses and Rs. 16 lakhs for recurring expenses is allocated per KVK.

In areas where the KVK center attains a saturation point in one cluster and all interested participants are trained, CET has decided to introduce extension centers attached to that KVK or even shift the KVK altogether to a different town/ village.



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



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

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

Monitoring Mechanism

The National Information Centre (NIC) has developed an online portal for CET to track the progress of the KVK program. The coordinator at each KVK updates information regarding enrollments in each course by category (women/ SC/ ST/ BPL/ PH) on the portal. The information can be accessed online using a password entry. Summary reports collated for each KVK, district and region can also be generated and printed from the portal.

CET has also established a monitoring regime for the program. Regular meetings are held at the head office for all KVK coordinators to present the progress and key highlights of their center. DTE also involves principals and faculty of ITI to conduct regular audits and inspection of all KVK centers. The kaushalya samitis also act as effective monitoring agencies ensuring proper infrastructure and quality of training at KVKs.

SNo.	KVK Name	Registered	Course Defined	Batch Defined
1	Dabhala	2920	31	138
2	Ghatlodiya (P.H)	88	3	9
3	Kamboi (Samou)	1850	6	52
4	Kherva	3398	10	144
5	Ladol	4199	13	202
6	Pethapur	2080	10	97
7	Randheja (Rupa)	3736	16	113
8	Unversad	1994	22	128
9	Vastrapur (P.H)	350	14	34
10	સાવલિયા-KVK	2350	41	146
11	સાવલિયા-KVK	2274	26	107
12	સાવલિયા-KVK	3630	34	127
13	સાવલિયા-KVK	2084	34	105
14	સાવલિયા-KVK	3411	26	122
15	સાવલિયા-KVK	2023	24	107

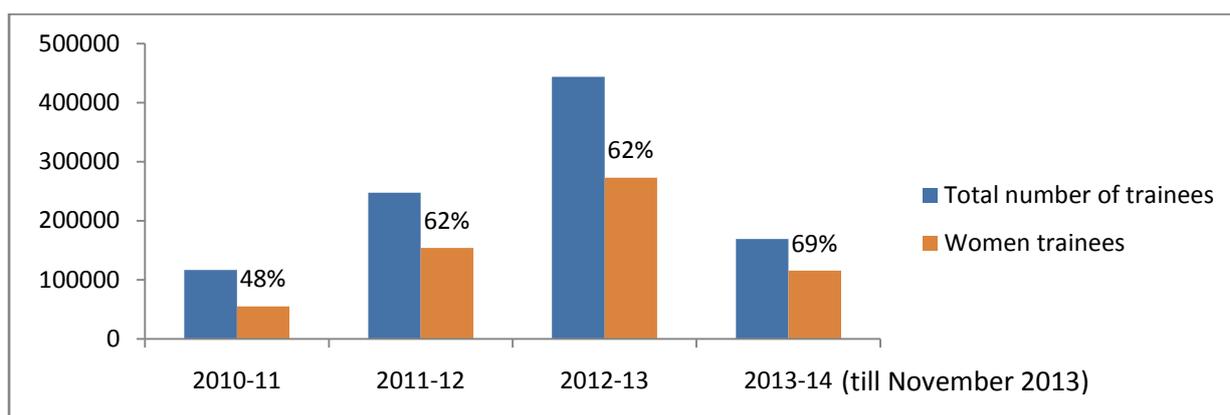
The KVK online portal helps track the progress of program

Outcome and Impact of the KVK program

More than 97 lakh people have been trained in Gujarat under the KVK program in the last three years, out of which more than 59 lakh or 61% are women. Women participation in the program is consistently increasing every year indicating a breakthrough in vocational training program design. The KVK program has been able to ensure consistent enrollment of women by offering courses in trades popular among women and conducive to home-based employment.

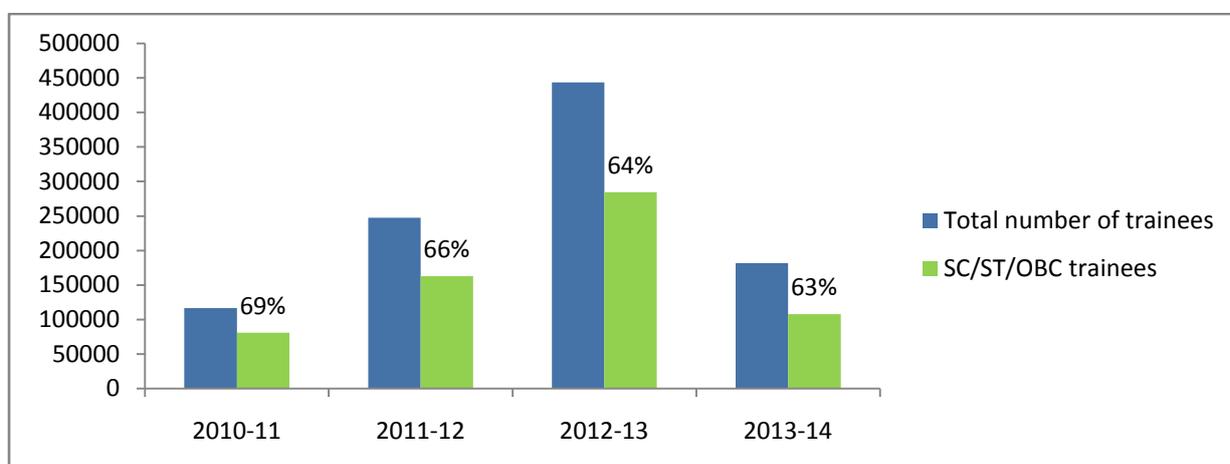
Year (March – Apr)	Total number of trainees	SC	ST	OBC	Other	Women trainees	Physically Handicapped (PH)	BPL
2010-11	116565	13512	33147	34121	35785	55372	254	6320
2011-12	247526	28728	58585	75635	84578	153806	466	10806
2012-13	443608	49101	114317	120824	159366	273156	1705	18567
2013-14 (Till November)	181858	17522	52291	45146	66899	125487	757	8265
Total	989557	108863	258340	275726	346628	607821	3182	43958

Year wise enrollment in KVK program



Enrollment of women in the KVK program is seeing a consistent increase

The enrollment of SC/ST and BPL candidates in the program has also been consistent.



Learnings

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

- Adopting a cluster based approach to providing skill training can improve access to vocational education in rural areas.
- Making skill training programs more flexible by offering short term courses (average 2 months) and limiting the course timings to maximum 4 hours a day, has proved successful in increasing women enrollment.
- Providing need based, industry responsive courses enhances the opportunities for employment and self employment.
- A clear policy framework with roles and responsibilities of government and private stakeholders clearly delineated, and mobilizing existing government machinery to make decision making prompt and responsive are key reasons for the successful implementation of the program.
- Enrollment of women in the KVK program can be further increased by mandating participation of women in the Kaushalya Vardhan Samitis.
- By fostering industry linkages and tie-ups with traders and marketers for home-based businesses, the KVK program can be made more attractive for prospective trainees.
- Gender stereotyping in vocational courses is still evident. Skills such as tailoring are culturally associated with women while other skills such as plumbing, basic electrical are associated with men. The KVK program has been able to break some of these barriers by offering courses such as motor driving and basic computer education which are equally popular among men and women. The program has the potential to encourage participation of women in non-traditional occupations.

The way forward

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

The KVK program has been widely appreciated by the Planning Commission, Ministry of Labour, Government of India, State Governments and other bodies including the Confederation of Indian Industry, FICCI and The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India. The Planning Commission is considering adopting the KVK model to design PPP architecture for 5000 new skill development centers (SDCs) to be established all across the country. The program has also received the PM's award excellence in public administration for 2012 for its innovative approach and successful implementation.

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

Success stories at KVK

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

Promoting self employment and entrepreneurship among women

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



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

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

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

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



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

Providing focused skill specific training by harnessing industry linkages

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

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

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



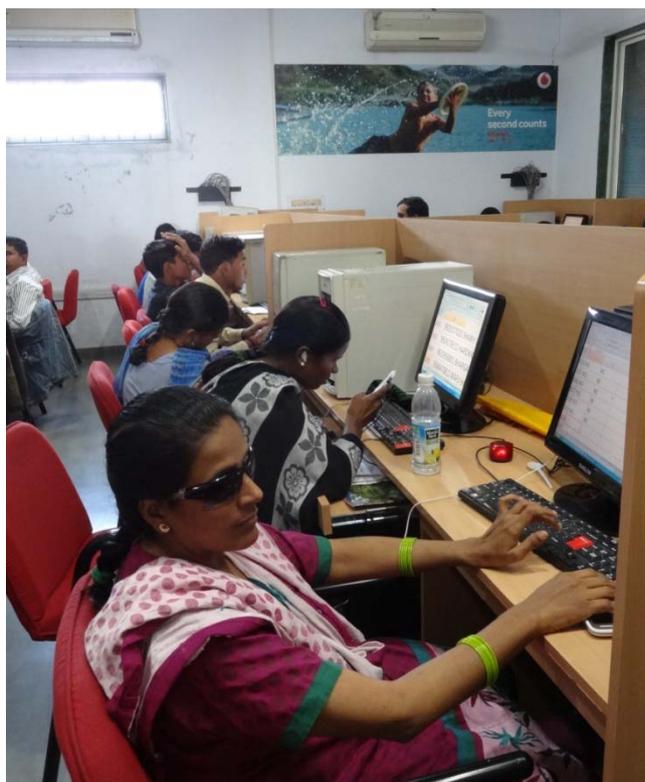
Short term course and job fair organized by KVK in partnership with TATA Yazaki in 2011

3

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

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

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



Differently-abled candidates employed at the Vodafone call centre

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

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

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

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



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