



Social Impact Assessment Certification

This is to certify that the Social Impact Assessment of

Women Skilling Project implemented by

Gram Vikas Society

A CSR Project of Ramco Cements

has been conducted by Social Audit Network, India

*The assessment was done for the projects implemented in
Dharwad and Haveri, Karnataka during the period 2023-25
and is found to be in full compliance with Ramco's mission*

***“In creating a better future for all our stakeholders through targeted initiatives
in health and well-being, education, environment, emergency relief, and
town planning & community development”***

Director, Social Audit Network, India

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SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Women Skilling Project by Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society



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1. Introduction

Women around the world often face numerous challenges and are typically marginalized when it comes to accessing education, employment, and healthcare. This trend is stark in developing countries like India where rural women, in particular, are more profoundly affected. One of the key factors contributing to this is the low rate of women achieving economic independence.

The 2023 Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum ranks India 127th in women's economic participation and opportunity. Only 22% of women in India are part of the labour force, compared to 78% of men, highlighting the deeply entrenched disparity in employment. Also, wage inequality remains a critical issue, with women earning 34% less than men for similar work, according to the International Labour Organization.

As a result, rural women face the consequences of limited job opportunities. The absence of a stable income leaves them economically dependent and vulnerable. This lack of income-generating opportunities deepens their socio-economic struggles, rendering them dependent on the menfolk. There is, therefore, a critical need for reforms in this area.

Bridging this gap requires systemic changes, including creating accessible job opportunities, and offering fair wages. But to reach this, rural women must be equipped with the skill-sets that enable them to become economically self-sufficient.

In Dharwad and Haveri, northern districts of Karnataka, the plight of women is exacerbated by poverty, limited access to education, deeply entrenched gender and societal biases. Many women in the districts face significant barriers to education due to financial constraints, early marriages, and societal expectations that prioritize domestic responsibilities over personal growth. To enable them to live dignified lives, there is an urgent need for income-generating initiatives and skill development programs tailored to meet the requirements of the local market.

To contribute towards addressing this issue, Ramco Cements partnered with Gram Vikas Society in February 2024 to launch the 'Ramco Women Skilling Project,' aimed at empowering 1,920 women in Dharwad and Haveri districts in Karnataka. The project is implemented by Gram Vikas Society, a Dharwad-based NGO with a presence in 14 states across India. Ramco Cements sponsored the training programs conducted at four centres in Dharwad, equipping women with skills to enhance their livelihoods.

This report, submitted by SAN India outlines the finding of an impact assessment of the programme. It serves as a reflective tool for the organization and offers recommendations for enhancing the impact of the programme.

2. Objectives of the study

Ramco Cements partnered with Gram Vikas Society in Dharwad and Haveri, Karnataka to train 1,920 women in tailoring and other skills in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Ramco requested SAN India to conduct a Social Impact Assessment of the '**Women Skilling Project**' project. The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the implementation process, measuring the achievements, and assess the relevance of the program to the selected beneficiaries. The primary goal is to provide insights into the effectiveness of the project and its long-term benefits to the women served. The assessment determined the socio-economic and impact on the target group and evaluated the sustainability of the project's benefits, offering recommendations for future similar interventions.

The study was conducted by Ms. Marie Banu and Ms. Neeta N K, Social Auditors of SAN India. Field visits were conducted to four centres in Dharwad and Haveri as part of the assessment process. They were ably guided by Ms. Latha Suresh, Director of SAN India.

3. Methodology & Scope

The visits included collecting feedback from stakeholders through structured consultations. An initial virtual meeting with a representative from Gram Vikas Society was conducted to finalize the consultation plan and establish timelines.

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. A desk review of documentation provided by Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society was done. This review established a baseline understanding of the project's intended objectives and its execution.

To capture a real-time picture of the project's impact, primary data was collected through:

- In-Depth Interviews: Conducted with beneficiaries, trainers, programme staff and head of Gram Vikas Society to gain insights into their perceptions of the project.
- Focused Group Discussions (FGD): Held to beneficiaries' collective experiences regarding the project.
- Consultations: Engaged with key stakeholders from Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society to gather feedback on the project's implementation and effectiveness.

The scope of the assessment is from February 2024 to September 2024.

4. Geographical Coverage

Table 1 Map of Karnataka with Dharwad and Haveri



Dharwad and Haveri, located in the northern part of Karnataka, are considered backward districts by the Govt of India. Despite their rich cultural heritage, the districts face issues like poverty, limited industrialization, and inadequate infrastructure. Agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood, but reliance on traditional farming methods further exacerbates rural poverty. The districts' backwardness is reflected in the plight of its womenfolk, especially in terms of income and employment opportunities.

The lack of access to formal employment, skill training further restricts women's ability to improve their income. Addressing these challenges requires efforts to promote women's participation in vocational training, and encouraging entrepreneurship through financial and support. Empowering women in both the districts is therefore crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and driving inclusive growth.

5. Stakeholders

Table 2 Stakeholders consulted

Type of Stakeholder	Nos. Consulted	Type of Interaction
Women Beneficiaries	193	Focus Group Discussion
Master Trainer	1	One to One
Centre trainers	8	One to One
CTO- Gram Vikas Society	1	One to One
Founder- Gram Vikas Society	1	One to One
Office Staff- Gram Vikas Society	1	One to One
CSR Team- Ramco Cements	1	One to One
Anganwadi Centre Teacher and Staff	2	One to One
Total	213	

The auditors from SAN India visited four centres to interact with the trainers and the beneficiaries with the aim to evaluate the impact and gather detailed feedback on the programme. In all, 193 beneficiaries were met with.

Table 3 Interaction with beneficiaries

Date of Visit	Centre	No of beneficiaries interacted with
07-11-2024	Alnavar	49
08-11-2024	Uppin Betkeri	35
	Aralikatti	62
	Savanur	47
Total		193

Words from the Founder

" I have witnessed first-hand the challenges faced by women in rural areas like Dharwad and Haveri. Merely providing tailoring training is not enough for women who come from such economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Many lack access to basic resources needed to sustain and apply the skills they learn. They also often struggle with confidence and have limited exposure to essential life skills, such as communication and financial literacy. For instance, many of the women in our programme had never used a bank account before.

This highlighted the need for a multi-pronged approach—one that not only teaches vocational skills but also empowers women with the confidence and knowledge to manage their finances, express themselves effectively, and become truly independent.

– Jagadish Naik, Founder.

6. Report on Performance

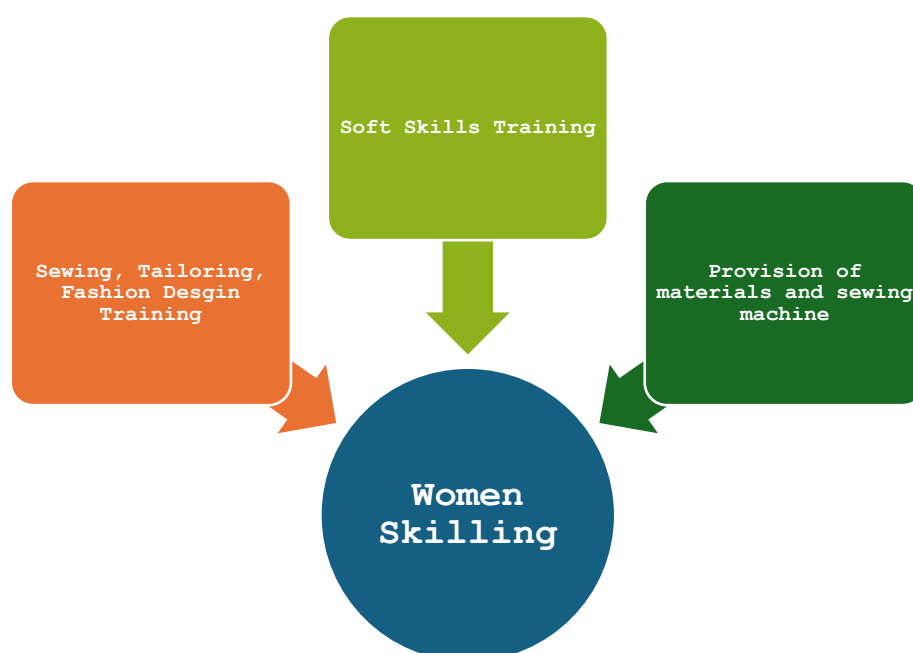
The Women's Skilling Project by Gram Vikas Society seeks to empower women to overcome societal challenges and reach their full potential by equipping them with skills to enhance their income. The initiative provides tailoring training, thereby enabling women to learn a valuable skill that can contribute to their personal and financial growth. The overarching aim of the programme is to provide more than just skills—it seeks to inspire women to **have aspirations for better income, meaningful careers, and renewed hope** for their future.

The key objectives of the programme as per the MOU signed with Ramco are as follows.

1. To impart skill development trainings to women and explore the opportunities in the target area so as to equip them with employable skills.
2. To explore sustainable and alternate development methods of livelihoods.
3. To ensure a sustainable income through vocational activities to alleviate poverty.

In February 2024, Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society joined hands to deliver the programme to 1,920 women in four centres in Dharwad and Haveri. The trainings happened in two phases (Feb-March 2024 and April-September 2024).

Figure 1 Key activities of the project



The **Women Skilling Project** aimed to empower women by equipping them with essential vocational skills. Through this initiative, 1,920 women received training in **Tailoring, Fashion Designing, and Sewing**, delivered via offline sessions at four strategically located training centres across three Talukas in Dharwad district and one Taluka in Haveri district.

The training was conducted from February 2024 to September 2024, with each batch comprising of 40 participants attending six-hour sessions a day from Monday to Friday, for one month period. Two dedicated trainers facilitated the training for the participants.

In addition to vocational skills, the project included training in **Marketing, Personality Development, Soft Skills, and Financial Literacy**, conducted by expert trainers in two-hour sessions per theme. Upon completing an **assessment**, participants were certified by a certified assessor and provided with a **sewing machine** to support their entrepreneurial journey. By combining vocational and life skills, the '**Women Skilling Project**' aimed to promote economic independence and empowerment for women in the region.

Words from the team

This programme goes beyond skill-building; it is about transforming lives, inspiring hope, and creating opportunities for women to ultimately break free from cycles of poverty and achieve their full potential." - **Sachin Alatagi**.

Process followed

- **Promoting awareness in the community:** The programme began with the identification of beneficiaries by involving community assistants (CA) hired by Gram Vikas Society. The CA worked with the community to generate awareness and interest about the programme.
- **Accepting applications:** Interested participants were identified through community engagement and outreach efforts, and applications were accepted from those who expressed willingness to participate. In all 2,940 applications were accepted during the two phases.
- **Review of applicants:** The submitted applications were thoroughly reviewed to ensure the selection of the most deserving candidates. The review process focused on assessing the needs, demographic backgrounds, and income levels of the applicants. Priority was given to individuals below the poverty line or those belonging to marginalized households.
- **Finalization of participants and batch allocations:** 1,920 participants were selected to the programme. Once the participants were finalized, they were divided into smaller groups or batches based on their geographical locations to make the training process efficient and accessible.
- **Provision of trainings:** Over the course of 180 hours training, spread over 30 days, participants received hands-on training. Master trainers with expertise in these areas conducted the sessions. After covering the theoretical and practical components of the training, participants were given opportunities to practice and refine their newly acquired skills. The programme provided essential raw materials such as cloth, thread, needles, and other tools to aid in this process. Each batch was provided with optional exposure visits to garment factories to further gain insights into the nuances of the craft.
- **Assessment:** Following the completion of the training programme, assessments were conducted to evaluate the participants' proficiency. These assessments were carried out by an NSDC-certified assessor. The assessments were conducted one month after the training ended, and successful candidates were awarded certificates based on their performance.
- **Provision of sewing machines:** To further support the participants in their journey toward economic independence, those who passed the assessments were provided with Usha model sewing machines to enable them to continue practicing their skills and establish income-generating activities from their homes or communities.

Table 4 Overall Reach of the Programme

Overall Programme Reach	
Phase 1 participants	576
Phase 2 participants	1,344
Total	1,920

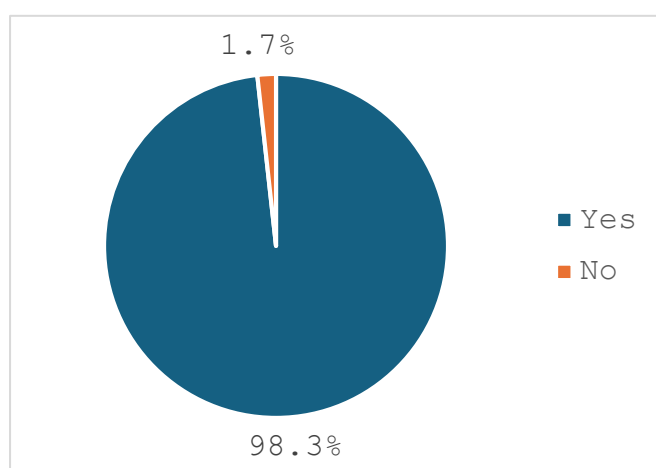
In all, 1920 participants benefitted from the programme. Of this, 576 were trained in Phase 1 (February and March 2024) of the programme and 1,344 were trained in Phase 2 (April to September 2024).

Women from four centres, located across four talukas in two districts, participated in the programme. The details of beneficiaries trained at each centre are as follows.

Table 5 Details of trainees' block-wise

Centre	Block	District	Phase 1	Phase 2	Total
Aralikatti	Kundgol	Dharwad	144	336	480
Alnavar	Alnavar	Dharwad	144	336	480
Uppin Betkeri	Dharwad	Dharwad	144	336	480
Savanur	Savanur	Haveri	144	336	480
Total reached			576	1,344	1,920

Figure 2 Beneficiaries % who cleared assessment

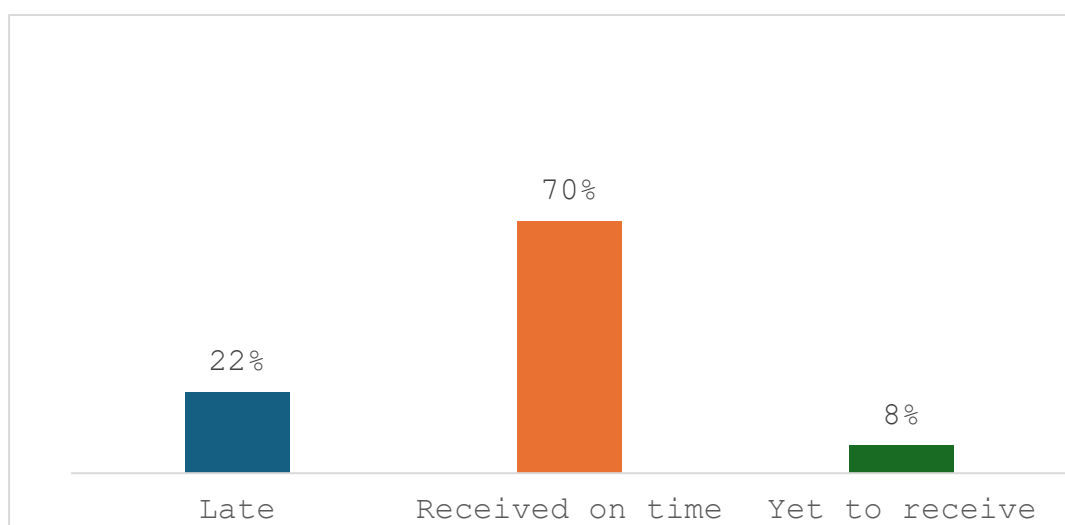


Out of 1,954 people who joined, 1,920 (98.2%) **passed the assessments**. The assessments were completed approximately 4–6 weeks after the course concluded, resulting in delays in the certification process. These delays have hindered participants from promptly receiving their certifications, which are crucial for pursuing employment or self-employment opportunities.

In all, 1,341 participants had **received the sewing machine** during the time of

the audit. A critical issue was noted with regards to the timing of distribution of sewing machines.

Figure 3 Receipt of sewing machine- timeliness



Words from the team

"As an employee of Gram Vikas Society, I have had the privilege of witnessing the impact of the Women Skilling Project on the lives of women in Dharwad. Through training in tailoring, sewing, and fashion design, the programme equips women with practical skills that open doors to self-reliance and income generation. The inclusion of life skills sessions, covering financial literacy, soft skills, and personality development, empowers them. The distribution of sewing machines to certified participants has really helped them a lot, as it is the first step for them to start their own ventures and contribute to their family income." – Sachin Alatagi, Gram Vikas Society.

Breaking boundaries: Savita's journey to independence

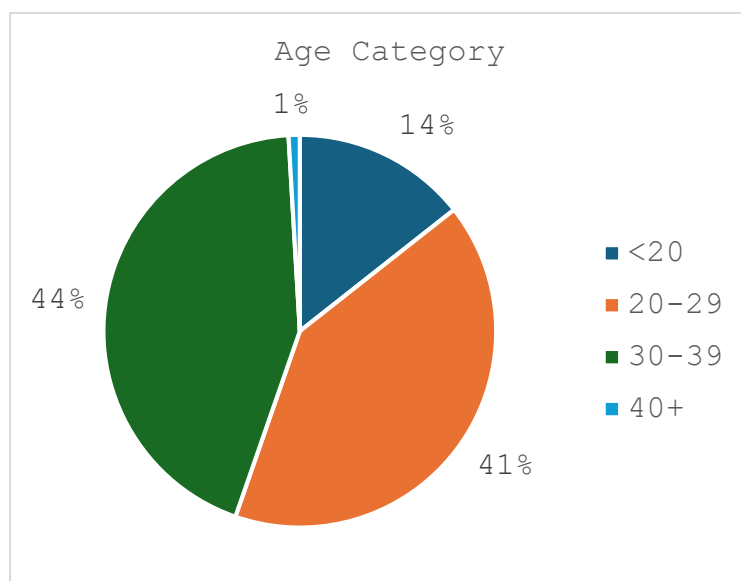
My name is Savita, and I come from a traditional, conservative family in which stepping out of the house wasn't always an option. My life revolved around my home, and I never imagined I could earn money or have a purpose beyond my household duties.

Everything changed when my husband's friend's wife joined a skills training program by Gram Vikas Society. She encouraged me to join, but I hesitated. My husband noticed my curiosity and, to my surprise, supported me in taking this step.

Through the program, I learned skills I never thought I could. After completing the training, I got a job at a garment factory, where I now earn my own income. For the first time in my life, I feel confident and capable. What's even more special than earning money is the respect and understanding I now share with my husband. The money I earn helps my family, but the real reward is the freedom to do what I am good at. I am deeply grateful to Gram Vikas Society for opening doors I never knew existed.

7. Survey Findings

Figure 4 Age of beneficiaries

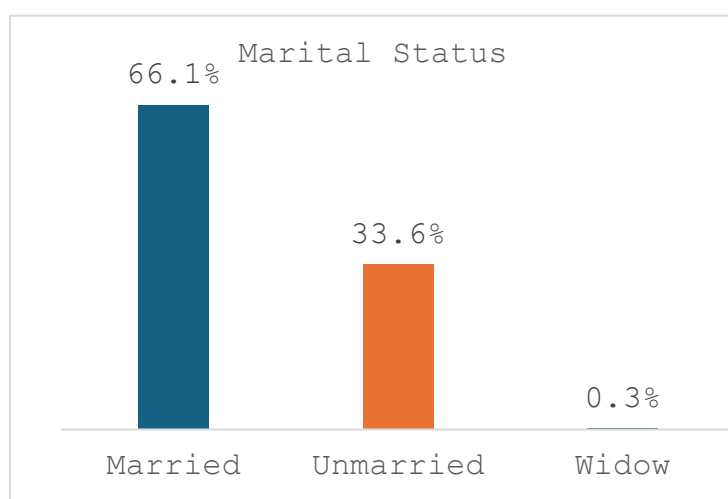


14% percent of the beneficiaries are aged less than 20, while 41% percent belonged to the 21 to 29 years. A significant percentage (44%), were in the 30-39 age bracket, and only a minuscule (1%), with just two participants, were aged 40 and above. This indicates that the women skilling project primarily attracted younger individuals.

The demographic data highlights that 70 % of the 1,920 participants, belonged to the OBC category,

while 23.3% were from the SC category, and 6.3% from the ST category. 3% of the beneficiaries (53 participants) belonged to minority religions. This distribution indicates that the programme's reach has effectively benefited underprivileged and marginalized sections of society.

Figure 5 Marital Status of the beneficiaries

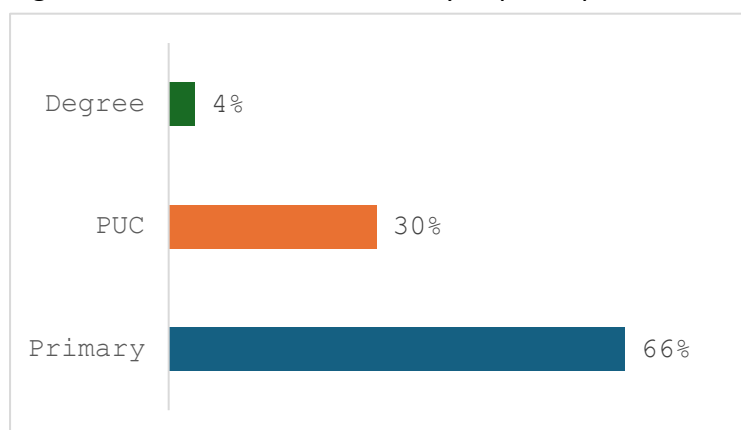


Majority of the beneficiaries (66%) are married, indicating that the programme primarily supports women aiming to enhance their economic contribution to their families. Approximately 34% are unmarried, representing younger women or those prioritizing career before marriage.

The inclusion of divorced women suggests that the reach extends to those seeking financial independence and rebuilding their lives after personal challenges. This highlights the project's potential to empower women at different stages of life and personal

circumstances.

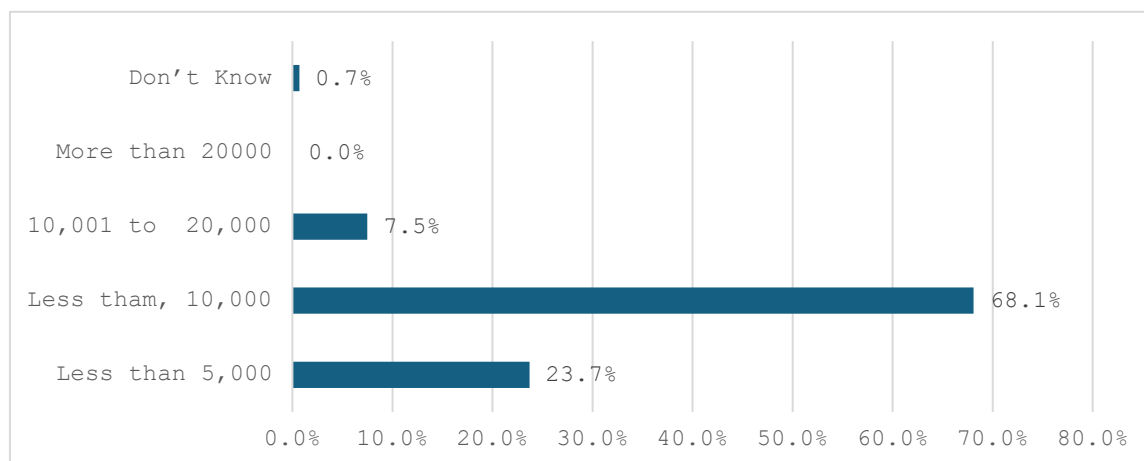
Figure 6 Education levels of surveyed participants



Of the 193 participants surveyed during the audit, 66% reported having completed only primary schooling, 30% had finished their PUC, and just 4% had obtained a degree.

This indicates that the women lacked the qualifications and skill sets required to pursue high-earning jobs and hence, would have benefitted from the training.

Figure 7 Income levels of surveyed participants

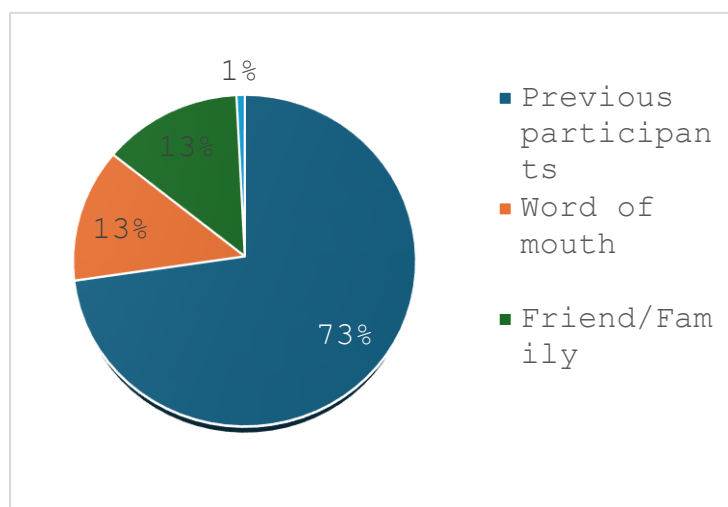


68.1% of the participants surveyed reported that their family's monthly income ranged from Rs 5,001 to Rs 10,000. 23.7% of the participants earned less than Rs 5,000 per month. These income levels highlight the economic challenges faced by the women and their families, with below or near the poverty line.

Founder Speaks

"The collaboration between Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society is a shared commitment to empowering women in Dharwad with the skills and confidence needed for self-reliance. By providing vocational training in tailoring, sewing, and fashion design, along with essential life skills and financial literacy, we are helping women overcome economic barriers and unlock their full potential. This initiative creates a pathway toward brighter, more independent futures for these women." - **Jagadish Naik, Founder, Gram Vikas Society.**

Figure 8 Knowledge about the training



When queried on how the trainees learned about the training, 73% of respondents said they were informed by previous participants, 13% mentioned hearing about it from friends or family. Another 13% cited word of mouth and 1% stated community mobiliser.

This highlights that the programme has established a strong presence within the community. The recommendations from past beneficiaries serve as a crucial factor in encouraging others to join

the programme. The fact that a majority were influenced by previous participants highlights the previous participant's positive outlook towards the training's effectiveness.

Table 6 Reasons for enrolment

Reasons for joining	No of beneficiaries
To learn new skills	72
To stitch clothes for myself and my family	56
To start a business	137

The beneficiaries provided multiple reasons for joining the programme. 71% expressed a desire to start their own business, while 37% were motivated by the opportunity to learn new skills. Additionally, 27% wanted to learn how to stitch clothes for themselves and their families to save money.

Feedback from trainees

"I heard about this training from a friend who had completed it in February, and I decided to join because of her positive experience. I want to be financially independent"

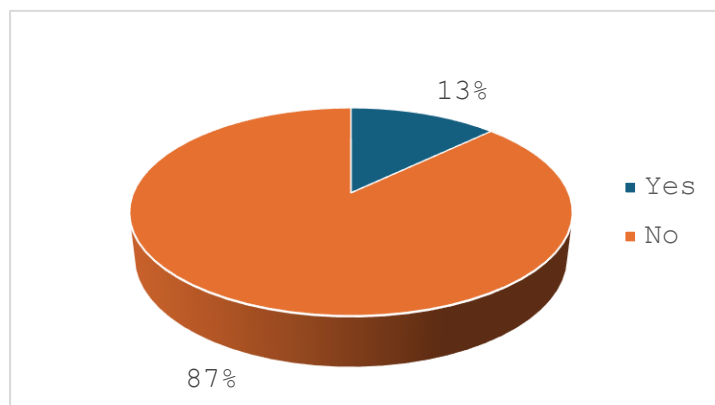
"I joined this programme because I wanted to learn new skills that would help me start my own tailoring shop".

I have always loved stitching. This training has given me the confidence to open a small business at home and support my family."

"My goal was to learn how to stitch clothes for myself and my family. I've always struggled with buying clothes for my children."

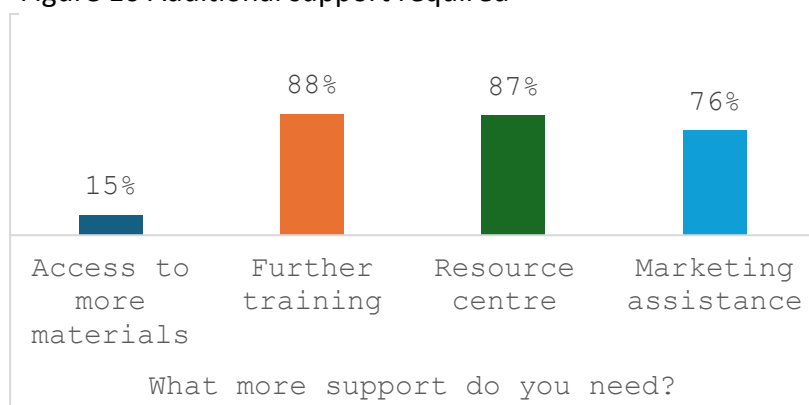
Nearly 95% of the participants stated that they were not employed and had no means of income before attending the training, highlighting that the programme was offering these women their first opportunity to earn.

Figure 9 Adequacy of course duration



87% of the participants stated that while the 30-day program was adequate to learn basic skills, the duration could be extended and advanced training could be provided to ensure that they could refine their skills and learn more about other styles of tailoring etc. They believed that this could help them earn more money in future.

Figure 10 Additional support required



While 88% of the participants felt they needed more training, 15% of the participants believed that access to more raw materials would help them practice and improve their skills. A significant 76% felt they required more support in marketing, selling, and promoting their products.

87% expressed interest in Gram Vikas Society setting up a resource centre with advanced machines. When asked if they would be willing to pay a fee for the resource centre, only three women agreed, with the rest declined. Those who accepted felt that a fee of Rs 100 per month was reasonable and affordable.

Beneficiaries' expectations

"I feel that more training would help me refine my skills. I've learned a lot, but there's still so much I need to understand."

"Access to raw materials would make a huge difference. Right now, I don't always have the resources to practice."

I am confident that I can make beautiful clothes, but reaching customers and promoting my products is something I am not confident about. I really hope there's more support in this area."

Only 47% of participants mentioned that they had started sewing and **using the skills they learnt**. This data may be attributed to the fact that the remaining participants had not yet received their sewing machines.

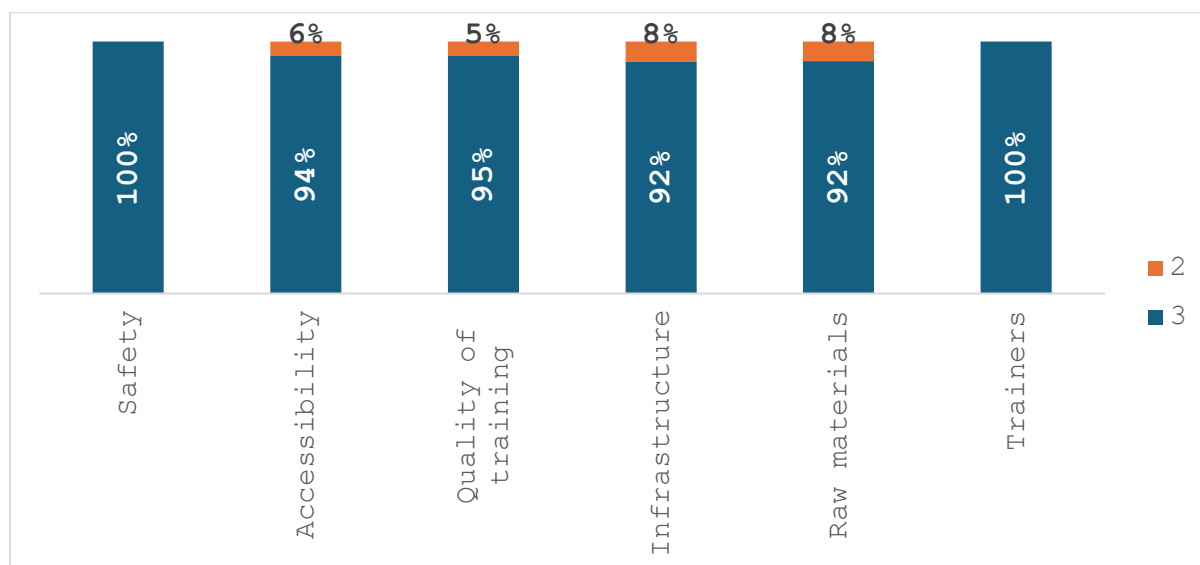
78% of participants reported that there were **no training centres in the areas** where they lived, highlighting the relevance and necessity of the programme. Even the few training centres that existed charged fees ranging from Rs 1,000 to 1,500, which was deemed unacceptable by the participants.

"There are no training centres in Savanur, and even if there are, they charge too much and are not something I can afford. That's why this programme is so useful for us." – Radhika, Savanur

Participants were asked to rate various parameters of the programme on a scale of 1 to 3, with 3 being the highest. All participants gave a **rating of 3 for safety** and the **quality of trainers**. This indicates that these two aspects were considered the strongest and most satisfactory elements of the programme, suggesting that the women felt secure during the training and highly valued the expertise and support provided by the trainers.

When it came to other parameters such as accessibility, quality of training, infrastructure, and raw materials, only 5-8% of participants rated these aspects as 2. The majority gave ratings of 3, indicating that while these areas were deemed highly satisfactory too.

Figure 11 Beneficiary satisfaction of the programme- Rating



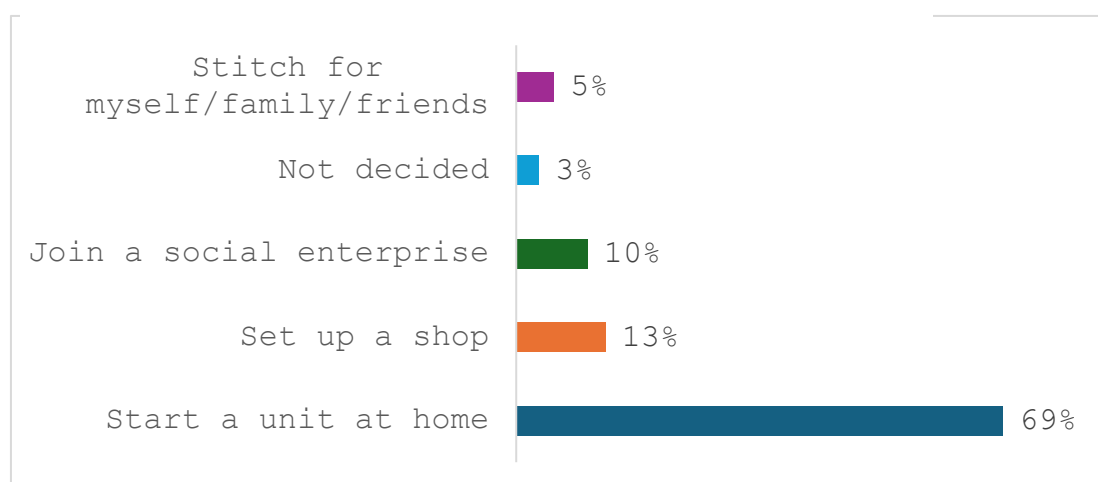
When asked if they would **recommend the course** to other women, all participants responded positively. 42% stated that they had already recommended the course to others. This indicates that the programme was well-received, with participants believing that others would also benefit from it.

"We learnt a lot and the trainers are good. I am now confident about my skills. I have already recommended this course to my friends and family because I believe it can help them just like it helped me."- Bharathi, Beneficiary

81% of the participants reported having significantly **higher confidence levels** in managing their income after the training compared to before, while 19% indicated fair levels of confidence. This suggests that the programme has had a positive psychological impact, empowering the women to feel more capable and self-assured in handling their finances.

The FGD revealed that 69% of the participants **plan to start a unit** at home, indicating a strong interest in entrepreneurship. A smaller portion (13%) aspired to set up a shop. About 10% are interested in joining a **collective enterprise**.

Figure 12 Plans for the future



From Hesitant Learner to Confident Woman: Bharathi's Story

My name is Nagaratna, and for the longest time, I believed that managing money was not something I could do. I had no confidence, and honestly, no idea where to start. When I first heard about this program, I wasn't sure if it was for me. But the encouraging words of a friend pushed me to join.

The trainers were patient and skilled, helping me understand not just the technical aspects of tailoring but also how to manage finances, saving money. For the first time, I felt confident in my abilities.

I've already recommended this course to my friends and family because I've seen how it can help. Today, I am more confident than I was before the training. This program didn't just teach me skills; it gave me courage.

8. Evaluation of Impact using REESS framework

The impact of the programme was assessed based on the REESS framework. *The **REESS** framework measures the performance of development programs based on five parameters –*

Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Social Impact and Sustainability. The REESS criteria answers the following questions and is defined as follows

Relevance	How important is the relevance or significance of the ' Women Skilling Project ' project?
Effectiveness	Are the planned objectives of the ' Women Skilling Project ' being achieved in the programme area?
Efficiency	Are the objectives being achieved in a judicious manner (in terms of time, resources, money spent) for the project?
Sustainability	Are the positive effects or impacts sustainable? Are sustainability plans in place for continuation of the project?
Social Impact	Does the intervention contribute to social change? What is the impact or effect of the intervention to the primary stakeholders?

****Indicators were evolved separately for these five parameters for each project. The following 10- point performance rating scale was evolved to evaluate the performance of each REESS action indicator.

Rating	Grade
1-2	Poor
3-4	Satisfactory
5-6	Good
7-8	Very Good
9-10	Excellent

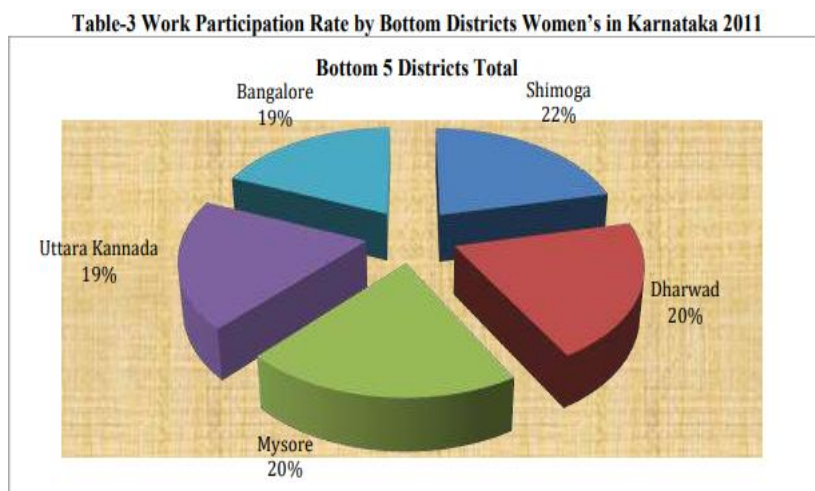
Relevance

Demographic profile of the beneficiaries: All beneficiaries of the programme come from underprivileged backgrounds. During the field- level FGD, 68% of the beneficiaries reported that their family's monthly income ranged from 5,000 to 10,000, while 24% came from families earning less than 5,000. A review of the MIS given by the Gram Vikas Society also revealed that the majority of beneficiaries belong to reserved classes, with only 6 beneficiaries coming from OC/General categories. This highlights that the project is successfully reaching those who are most in need.

Trainers Speak

"This programme is very helpful for women from poor families. The training is step-by-step, so even those who don't know anything about tailoring can learn easily. It makes me happy to see them gain confidence and start earning for their families." – **Ashmita, Master Trainer**

Figure 13 Work Participation Rate District wise %



Low levels of women's job opportunities in the programme areas:

Dharwad, like many other districts in Karnataka, faces low levels of women's participation in the job sector. As per the Census 2011, the Work Participation Rate (WPR) for women in Dharwad was 26.5%. While rural areas had a higher WPR of 40.35%, Dharwad lagged behind. Haveri also faces similar issues

The low WPR reflects the socio-economic challenges that women in the districts face, such as traditional gender roles, limited education, and fewer job opportunities, especially in urban areas. Hence, providing opportunities for these women to upgrade their skill-sets and eventually enhance their job opportunities was important.

Application to enrolment ratio: During the study period, the Gram Vikas Society received 2,950 applications for 1,920 available slots in the training batch, resulting in a demand ratio of approximately 1.54:1 per slot. This means that for every available slot (1,920), there were about applicants (2,950). This high demand indicates that more people were interested in the training than the available slots, reflecting the programme's strong acceptance and popularity within the community.

Alignment with participant needs: Out of 193 participants surveyed, 98% (189 women) reported that the training aligned well with their requirements and career aspirations. All of them mentioned that the course content was relevant to their plans to start sewing within their homes or start a small- businesses in tailoring or sewing. By equipping women with these practical skills, the project opened doors for the women in Dharwad to self-employment opportunities.

Beneficiaries Speak

"The tailoring training programme by Gram Vikas Society has truly changed my life. Before joining, I had no idea how to start earning for my family. Over the course of the training, I learned not just sewing and tailoring but also fashion design and embroidery. The trainers were patient, and the practical skills we gained were good. Now, I dream of setting up a small tailoring unit at my home. My plan is to start by stitching clothes for neighbours and gradually grow my business. I want to save enough to invest in a shop and, eventually, hire two women to work with me. "- Shwetha, Beneficiary

Non-availability of other providers: All 193 participants surveyed (100%) highlighted that there were no other alternative training providers in their area offering similar programs free of cost. They unanimously reported that no other vocational training opportunities were

available within a 30 km radius. This highlights the key role of Gram Vikas in delivering a much-required training to the women in the programme areas.

Market demand: The project is highly relevant in the context of the Govt of Karnataka's plans to establish a Textile Park in Savanur as it aligns with the demand for skilled labour in tailoring, sewing, and garment production. With leading manufacturers like Texsports, Gokuldas, Prabhanjan, Prakash Garments, and SP Garments setting up operations in and around the programme area, there is a significant need for women equipped with tailoring skills in the near future. The collaboration between Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society focused on practical skills such as sewing, tailoring, and embroidery. This will equip the women to contribute effectively to the growing textile industry in Dharwad.

Team Speaks

As a resident of Dharwad, I've seen how much the textile industry is growing here. With so many new garment factories opening, it's clear that there's a huge demand for skilled workers. –

Sachin Alatagi

Alignment with Ramco Cements' CSR mandate: The women's skilling programme is aligned with Ramco's CSR initiatives which focus on empowering marginalized communities, focusing on self-reliance, and contributing to socio-economic development. By targeting women—a group often subjected to social neglect and limited economic opportunities—the programme fulfils Ramco Cement's commitment to creating inclusive growth.

Participant motivation: All the participants who interacted with the audit team demonstrated enthusiasm and expressed a strong desire to apply the skills they learned. 71% of the participants cited starting their own business as their primary motivation, while 27% (100 participants) were keen to learn new skills. 29% expressed a specific interest in stitching clothes for themselves, highlighting the programme's appeal.

Voices from the field

"This programme has been very useful for me. I've always wanted to start my own tailoring business. Now, with the training and the sewing machine provided, I'm ready to take the first step toward becoming financially independent."

"Learning to stitch clothes for my family makes me very happy. I can now save money on tailoring and even plan to take small orders from neighbours to earn extra income."

"The exposure and guidance have been incredibly great. I've already started stitching garments for a local boutique, and I hope to expand this into a full-fledged business soon."

Alignment with National framework: The project aligns with national frameworks such as NSDC and government initiatives like Skill India and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) by providing market-relevant vocational training that empowers women with skills in tailoring, sewing, and garment production. By focusing on women from underprivileged backgrounds, the programme contributes to national efforts to reduce the skill gap, promote self-employment, and support industry needs.

Alignment with International framework: The programme aligns with international frameworks such as the UN SDGS, particularly Goal 5: Gender Equality, and Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. By providing marginalized women with vocational skills in tailoring, sewing, and fashion design, the programme promotes gender equality by empowering women economically and socially. It also promotes self-reliance and job creation, contributing to local economic growth. The project also is aligned with SDG 1 (No Poverty) by offering women opportunities to increase their income and achieve financial independence.

Effectiveness

Overall reach and dropout rates: An analysis of the MIS data provided by the Gram Vikas Society team revealed that out of the 1,954 beneficiaries who enrolled, 1,920 successfully completed the programme, resulting in a dropout rate of just 1.3%. When asked about the reasons for the dropouts, the Gram Vikas Society team cited poor attendance, with a few participants being unable to continue due to personal reasons. Despite this, the high retention rate highlights the strong commitment of the participants and the programme's ability to keep most participants motivated and on track to complete the training.

Skill acquisition: Discussions revealed that none of the participants had any prior knowledge of the basics of tailoring or sewing before the training. Each participant underwent an average of 180 hours of training, which included hands-on experience in sewing, embroidery, tailoring, and a variety of styles, including Aari work, blouse designs, churidars, bags, kurtas, dresses, and frocks. Further, industrial visits and exposure visits were conducted to aid the women. The practical exercises were particularly valued, as they provided real-world experience that boosted the participants' confidence in their newly acquired skills.

After the FGDs conducted at the time of the audit, the SAN India team personally verified samples of these styles created by each of the 193 participants, and all were found to be of quality. This highlights the success of the programme in helping beneficiaries acquire new skills that are marketable.

Beneficiaries speak

"The tailoring and fashion design training I received was a great experience. Before joining the programme, I had no formal skills, but now I can confidently design and stitch garments, including intricate embroidery and Zari work."

"The hands-on training with the machines and expert guidance helped me understand industry techniques and trends. This programme has not only given me a skill but also a sense of confidence."

"I never thought I could learn so much in just 30 days! The training taught me sewing, dressmaking, and fashion design in a structured way, starting from the basics."

Provision of quality infrastructure and support: In addition to skill-based training, the programme provided regular counselling, mentoring, and support, along with a conventional

sewing machine for each participant. This multi-pronged approach effectively addressed the end-to-end needs of the beneficiaries. Mentoring sessions were conducted offline at the centres after class hours and via WhatsApp, ensuring timely guidance and feedback. The beneficiaries cited that these after-class sessions were particularly valuable in sharpening their skills and building confidence.

The distribution of sewing machines allowed participants to practice their newly acquired skills daily, reinforcing their learning.

The classrooms were equipped to accommodate the batch sizes and provided a conducive learning environment. Additionally, raw materials such as fabric, sewing kits, scissors, measuring tapes, buttons, hooks, and other consumables were supplied to ensure participants had everything they needed for their training. These efforts collectively contributed to the programme's effectiveness.

Trainers Speak

"The programme is well-planned and teaches everything women need to know about tailoring. Many women come here with no skills, but by the end, they are confident and ready to work. Seeing their hard work and progress motivates me to do my best as a trainer." - Vidhya, Centre Trainer

Employment outcomes: The audit was conducted shortly after the distribution of sewing machines and hence, no major immediate employment outcomes were observed. However, the programme has laid the groundwork for creating income sources and job opportunities for the beneficiaries.

Within three months of completing the training, less than 25% of participants reported securing employment in local tailoring shops and garment factories. This could be attributed to the fact that most of them had not received their sewing machines at the time of the audit.

Of those who had received the machines and started working, the monthly earnings ranging from ₹8,000 to ₹14,000. One participant even successfully established her own tailoring business and secured a contract, earning a steady income of ₹18,000 per month. This indicates that the programme has the scope and potential for employment opportunities and income generation.

Feedback from beneficiaries

"Before joining this programme, I wasn't earning anything. Today, I make ₹8,000 per month, which has been a tremendous support for my family. Contributing financially has given me a sense of pride.

"Being able to earn on my own has helped me a lot. I no longer need to ask anyone for money, which has boosted my confidence.

"I now work at a garment shop where I earn ₹12,000 for an 8-hour shift. Previously, I had no income at all, but thanks to Prahlad Joshi Sir and Gram Vikas Society, I have gained this job.

Trainer's point of view

"This programme gives poor women a chance to change their lives. They learn needed skills and even get a sewing machine to start their own work. It feels good to teach them and see them become confident." - Sandhya, Centre Trainer

Curriculum relevance: The curriculum for the programme was designed to be well-rounded, incorporating both technical and essential life skills. The training was a mix of theory and hands-on practice, totalling 180 hours. Participants learned crucial technical skills such as cutting, measuring, machine set-up, prototyping, fabric selection, understanding colour charts, and garment fitting, as well as the nuances of machine repair. The women were also taught how to develop samples, which they showcased during the audit. These samples were found to be good and demonstrated the practical impact of the training.

However, the feedback from beneficiaries revealed that 95% felt a need for advanced training and exposure to the latest designs. They also requested more in-depth knowledge of the latest trends and advanced techniques to enhance their skills and stay competitive in the industry.

Feedback from beneficiaries

"Before this training, I never understood that we needed to select the right colours. Learning about colour charts has made a huge difference in how I plan a garment. Now, I feel confident in my choices."

"Aari work was something I had never seen or heard of before. The training introduced me to this beautiful technique, and I've already started incorporating it into my designs".

"Before the training, I would have had no idea how to fix a sewing machine if it broke. Now, I can repair minor issues myself. It's saved me both time and money."

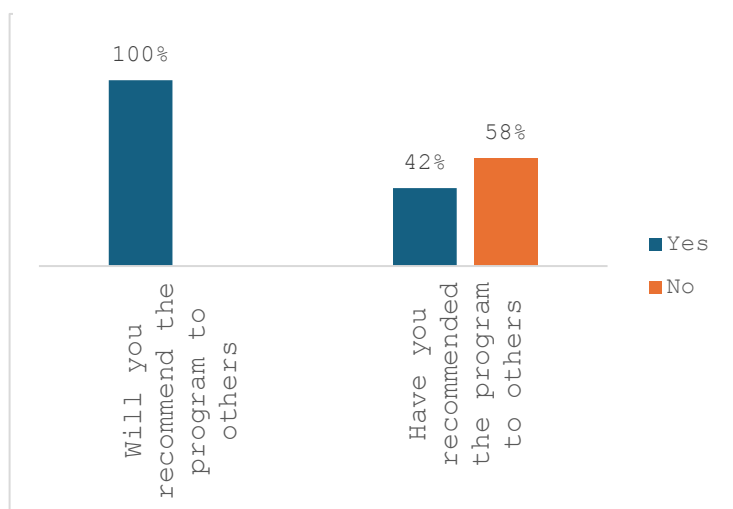
This programme has truly changed my life. I came in with no experience in sewing or tailoring, and now I feel ready to start my own business.

"The hands-on training made all the difference. Being able to practice what we learned gave me the confidence I needed to create new outfits."

All the participants also received training in soft skills (such as communication and customer service), financial literacy (budgeting, savings), and entrepreneurship (business planning, marketing). While the inclusion of soft skills training was beneficial, participants expressed that the 2-hour allocation for each subject was insufficient. They felt that more comprehensive training in these areas would be valuable.

Beneficiaries who completed the programme successfully: 1920 participants successfully earned certifications after completing both practical and theoretical assessments. These certificates, were given after a thorough assessment conducted by certified auditors from NSDC. However, it may be noted that the certificates are not from NSDC.

Figure 14 Beneficiaries satisfaction levels

**Beneficiary Satisfaction Levels:**

The positive feedback from the beneficiaries highlights that the programme was well-received and met their expectations. All the 193 survey participants mentioned that they would recommend the programme to others. 42% even indicated that they had already recommended the training to people they knew, indicating that the programme was very well-received.

The perfect score (3 out of 3) given for safety and the high ratings for

the quality of trainers suggest that the women felt secure and supported throughout their learning journey, which is crucial in building their confidence. 95% of those interviewed rated the accessibility and the quality of training as perfect, indicating that the centre was easily accessible and provided practical, high-quality learning experiences.

92% indicated extremely satisfaction with the infrastructure and raw materials, including sewing machines, shows that the programme provided the necessary tools and resources for the women to apply what they learned. Thus, it is evident that the multi-pronged support provided by Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas society, contributed to high levels of satisfaction among the beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries speak

"This programme has been a blessing for me. The trainers taught us so well. I've already told many women in my village to join because it has helped me stand on my own feet."

"The training centre was easy to reach, and the trainers were so kind and patient with us. I'm very thankful for this opportunity."

"We were given good sewing machines and all the materials we needed to learn. I never thought I could learn so much in such a short time."

Partner NGO Capacity: Gram Vikas Society, has an extensive presence and an experienced team comprising a programme manager, programme head, lead trainers, and community assistants. The trainers and master trainers are qualified in the field of fashion, while the community assistants possess a deep understanding of field-level dynamics. The organization has also established strong connections at the grassroots level and aligned itself with the political framework of Dharwad, enabling it to effectively mobilize resources and advocate for the cause of women empowerment. This strategic alignment and comprehensive team structure position the organization well to drive the programme forward and ensure its sustainability.

Efficiency

Affordability: The programme was offered entirely free of charge to the participants, covering not only the training but also the raw materials, course materials, books, and sewing machines. Given the financial background of these women, this support was greatly appreciated. All the beneficiaries (100%) expressed that they were able to participate and benefit from the programme solely because it was provided at no cost to them.

Beneficiary feedback on affordability

"I couldn't have afforded the training or materials on my own—thanks to this free programme, I'm now equipped with skills for a better future."

"The free sewing machine and materials made it possible for me to learn and start earning; without this support, I wouldn't have been able to join."

"Being part of this programme without any cost to me has been a wonderful opportunity—I never imagined I could get such valuable training for free."

Cost per participant: The programme incurred an average cost of ₹18,000 per participant. The other costs included rent, electricity, cost of trainers, assessment cost, raw materials, placement assistance, event expenses, training on additional skills, and industry leader talks. The average cost of each sewing machine was ₹7,000.

At ₹18,000 per participant, the training covered not only the cost of instruction but also provided a sewing machine, a key tool for self-employment. By comparison, similar training programs outside typically cost ₹15,000 but do not include a sewing machine. This makes the project a more cost-effective option.

Optimal utilization of resources: Each batch was supported by two trainers—a master trainer and an assistant trainer—ensuring a trainer-to-participant ratio of 20:1. This structure provided participants with personalized attention and hands-on support throughout the training. During the training, all the materials and equipment were fully utilized, with minimal wastage recorded. Efficient resource allocation, including pre-planned fabric cuts and regular maintenance of equipment, was noted. Moreover, the practice dresses created during the sessions were repurposed as uniforms for Anganwadi staff, ensuring that no materials went to waste. This approach not only optimized resource usage but also had a positive spillover effect by providing uniforms for Anganwadi teachers, while simultaneously supporting the women's skill development and practice.

Testimonial by Anganwadi Teacher

"The uniforms provided through this programme have made a significant difference in our Anganwadi centres. The efforts directly contributed to improving the appearance and pride of our children. The uniforms are of excellent quality, and it feels great to see the children wearing them and the parents are filled with pride."

Testimonial by team member

It's a wonderful way by which we ensure how community support can go full circle—providing both opportunities for women to train while improving the lives of the children we care for." – Sachin Alatagi

Timely Completion: The delays in assessments and the distribution of sewing machines have significantly affected the completion of the project. The late completion of assessments, which were conducted 4–6 weeks after the training, led to delays in issuing certifications. These certifications are vital for participants to secure employment. Similarly, the delay in distributing sewing machines has hindered participants from practicing and applying their newly acquired skills. The delay resulted in 30% of participants being unable to utilize their training effectively at the time of the audit.

During the field visit, 30% of participants (579) who completed their courses in July, August, and September reported not receiving their machines.

The delay was attributed to scheduling the distribution at an event based **on administrative issues and dependency on external parties**. Within two weeks following the assessment visit, an additional 431 machines were distributed. However, despite these efforts, 148 women (7%) are still awaiting their sewing machines at the time of the submission of this report. **This is an issue of concern as the sewing machines are a critical component of the programme. Without timely access, participants risk losing the skills and knowledge gained during the training, potentially undermining the programme's impact.**

Planned vs. Achieved milestones: The programme successfully met its objective of imparting skill development training to women, with 1,920 participants trained across four centres in sewing, tailoring, embroidery, and related vocational skills. Conducted by experienced master trainers, the sessions combined theoretical and practical components with life skills and confidence-building modules, equipping participants for employment or self-employment.

While steps were taken to identify sustainable and alternative livelihood development methods, additional efforts are needed to explore opportunities aligned with local market demands. The programme partially achieved the goal of ensuring sustainable income by distributing sewing machines to 70% of participants who completed the training. This support enabled many women to start tailoring businesses or secure employment, creating pathways for poverty alleviation and economic empowerment in their communities.

Training batch numbers and completion rate: A total of 49 training batches were held, with an average of 40 participants per batch. The low dropout rate, which was kept below 2%, talks about the success of the programme. Proactive counselling, along with continuous encouragement and assistance, played a key role in ensuring that participants remained committed to completing their training.

Monitoring and documentation: The programme had a robust monitoring system in place to track progress and outcomes. Regular meetings and follow-up communication via WhatsApp between the master trainers and the monitoring team ensured consistent oversight. Additionally, the use of CCTV, an attendance register, and reports allowed for real-time tracking of participant progress.

Currently, attendance, monitoring, and reports are maintained in a paper-based format, which makes the review process time-consuming. Transitioning to digital formats would streamline these processes, improve efficiency, and ensure quicker access to information when needed.

Qualification of trainers: 100% of the trainers met or exceeded the required qualifications for sewing, tailoring and fashion technology, including certifications from recognized vocational training institutes. All of them received rating of 3 on a scale of 1-3 (3, being highest) for their support provided.

Feedback on trainers

"The training I received in sewing and tailoring was wonderful. The trainers were not only qualified but also very patient and supportive throughout the entire process. They helped me understand the techniques in details.

Thanks to their guidance, I feel confident in my skills. I am truly grateful for this opportunity to have two good trainers.

"The fashion design and tailoring training provided by the trainers exceeded my expectations. They were very helpful, knew their field very well and made sure we understood everything step by step.

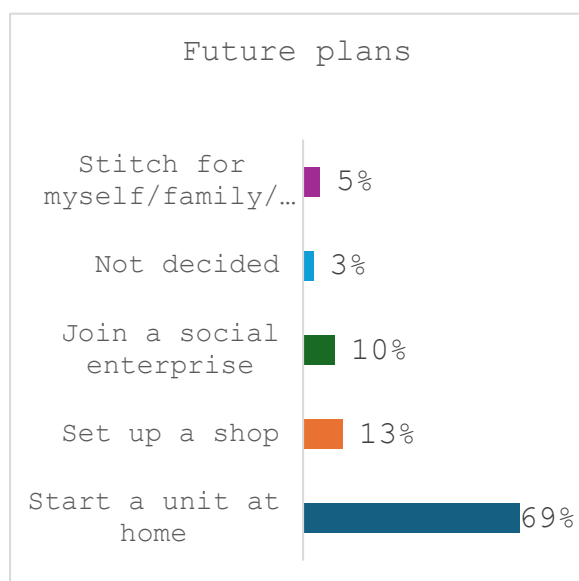
The practical approach and individual attention helped me grasp the concepts quickly. It's all thanks to the training and support I received."

The trainers for the life-skills and other areas appear to be skilled, bringing a wealth of experience across various industries. They came from backgrounds in social work, human resource management, counselling, media, and finance. Their diverse skill sets, such as financial analysis, soft skills training, corporate leadership, and development in multiple sectors, equipped them to deliver high-quality training.

Placement percentage: Although the programme's practical training and focus on market-aligned skills have led to good enrolment, the employment outcomes have not met expectations. Less than 5% of the trainees have found employment outside, and only a small number have started working from home. The job placement rate is lower than initially anticipated. To address this, Gram Vikas Society needs to focus on strengthening market linkages, creating job opportunities, and organizing campaigns to enhance income generation and close the loop between capacity building and sustainable work.

Sustainability

Long-term employment: The programme has demonstrated potential to support long-term



business and employment opportunities. *However, since many of the women come from the same local area, it would make business sense to offer advanced training in specialized areas such as Zardosi, Aari embroidery, and stitching to different subgroups of women.*

Providing advanced training in different specific skills would ensure that the market is not flooded with the same set of talents and will help create a diverse range of expertise.

Given that 92% of participants have expressed interest in either gaining employment or starting their own businesses after completing the training, this approach could be highly beneficial in equipping them with marketable

skills that will enhance their chances of success as professionals in the field.

Community networks and partnerships: Gram Vikas Society has established a broad network of partnerships, including collaborations with political representatives, local garment manufacturers, and other stakeholders, providing a strong foundation for empowering its participants. To ensure sustainability and deliver long-term benefits, there is a clear need to develop robust market linkages for selling the products created by the beneficiaries. Establishing a cooperative model could significantly enhance participants' earnings.

There are plans for implementing such a model by Gram Vikas Society.

Words from the team

" I have witnessed firsthand the incredible potential of our beneficiaries and the high quality of products they create. However, to ensure that their hard work translates into sustainable income, it is crucial that we intensify our market linkages. It's clear that expanding market access is key to the success of our programme, and I believe this is the next critical step for Gram Vikas Society." – Sachin Altagi

Collaboration with Government schemes: The programme, while closely aligned with the NSDC standards, currently operates independently.

Integrating NSDC certification would benefit the organization as it means reduced dependency on external funding. Certification would also enable access to Government incentives, partnerships, and a broader reach, making the programme more sustainable.

Diversity of donor networks: The diverse donor base of Gram Vikas Society has been instrumental in the success and reach of the project. Esteemed organizations such as JK

Cements, Tata Steel Foundation, Orient Fans, Aditya Birla Group, Neyveli Lignite Corporation, and JSW have supported the women skilling programme, enabling the organization to expand its impact significantly. Through their collective contributions, the programme has reached and benefited a total of 11,040 women, empowering them with skilling programs. Of this number, Ramco has supported 1,920 trainees. This strong donor base highlights the organization's ability to not depend on one donor and ensures programme sustainability.

Founder's words

"Over the years, we have been fortunate to build a vast and diverse network of over 124 CSR partners and donors who have played a pivotal role in the success and expansion of our programs". – Jagadish Naik, Founder

Alumni follow-up systems: Many alumni expressed that continued engagement would be beneficial in enhancing their skills, addressing challenges, and ensuring growth in their careers.

Continued skill building: In addition to empowering beneficiaries, Gram Vikas Society places a strong emphasis on the continuous development of its staff. Regular capacity-building programs are conducted to enhance their skills and knowledge, ensuring they stay updated on the latest market trends and industry developments. Dedicated WhatsApp groups help in real-time sharing of information, enabling staff to access valuable insights and updates that improve their effectiveness. Peer learning is encouraged through the formation of peer groups, where team members can exchange experiences, share best practices, and learn from one another.

Trainers feedback

"As a trainer, I also learn so much during the sessions. When trainees ask questions or share new designs and stitching patterns, I sometimes need to do research to guide them properly. This keeps me updated with new trends and helps me too. – Ashwini, Master Trainer

"I love it when trainees come up with new ideas and designs. Recently, a few of them sent pictures of blouse cuts they wanted to learn. This programme is a learning experience not just for the women but for us trainers as well."- Sandhya, Trainer

Social Impact

Women empowerment: The women's skilling programme by Gram Vikas Society, in collaboration with Ramco Cements, has made a significant impact on empowering women in the programme area. Through vocational training in tailoring, sewing, fashion design, and

related fields, the programme has equipped marginalized women with valuable skills that improve their job prospects and enable them to contribute to their families' income. 90% of the participants have reported increased empowerment and a greater sense of happiness as they gain independence and confidence through the training. Over 10% of the women also mentioned that the support they received from their families to pursue this program as a career option had increased.

"Empowered by family support: A mother-in-law's role in Geetha's success".

"My name is Geetha, and I live with my husband, two young children, and my ageing mother-in-law. Life was always busy with household chores, and I never thought I could do anything beyond taking care of my family. One day, my neighbour told me about a training program she attended. She spoke highly of it and showed me the designs she had learned. I was amazed, but I rejected the idea. I thought, 'How can I leave my home duties and who will take care of my children?'"

My mother-in-law, who initially wasn't supportive, saw the designs my neighbour made. To my surprise, she encouraged me to join and even offered to take care of the kids while I attended the training. With her support, I finally decided to give it a try. She took care of my children for the entire month that I was away.

The training changed everything for me. I learned skills I never thought I could, and I gained confidence in myself. Now, my mother-in-law proudly shows my work to everyone and encourages me to start my own business at home. She tells me I have a talent that shouldn't go to waste. Today, I feel proud and motivated. With the support of my family, especially my mother-in-law, I'm working on building something of my own. This would not have happened without Gram Vikas Society who provided everything for me."

Self-reliance and independence: By equipping women with technical skills and basic entrepreneurial knowledge, the programme helps build self-reliance and independence. The women are taught the basics of how to start their own businesses and manage their income. This allows them to make decisions about their own futures, reducing dependence on external sources of support. 92% of women reported having dreams of being financially independent, with the ability to support themselves and contribute significantly to household income.

Beneficiaries Speak

"The training taught me not just technical skills but also how to manage a business. I have dreams of expanding my own tailoring shop. I never thought this would be possible."

"This programme gave me the training I needed to be financially independent. I can soon contribute to my household and make decisions that improve my family's future. I'm excited about what I can accomplish."

Building community capacity: One of the Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas Society's core goals is to transfer knowledge and skills to the wider community. 24% of participants have

expressed interest in training or employing others in their communities. As the trained women will go on to start their own businesses or work in local industries, they will pass on their expertise to others. This has the potential to create a ripple effect where the community at large benefits from the newly acquired skills, whether it be through job creation, training other women.

Overcoming barriers: The Women Skilling Project actively works to break down barriers that hinder women's participation in the workforce. By providing training, mentorship, and sewing machine support, the programme helps women overcome obstacles like a lack of access to formal education, traditional gender roles, or limited mobility. It provides them with a platform to showcase their talents and capabilities, ensuring they have the confidence and tools necessary to succeed, regardless of the barriers they may have faced previously.

Economic upliftment: Economic upliftment is a central outcome of the programme. By helping women gain the skills to create products in demand, they are made capable to generate income for themselves and their families. This additional income is bound to help households economically, enabling participants to invest in better living conditions, healthcare, and education. Over 50% of the women reported that they would invest in their family and children's education when they start earning.

Career aspiration increase: The programme has played a crucial role in increasing career aspirations among women, with 92% of participants reporting increased interest in setting up their own tailoring units, pursuing advanced training, or even launching their own businesses. The training and skills they acquire provide the confidence to take on entrepreneurial ventures. 20 women even expressed interest in joining or forming cooperatives, which can further strengthen their careers. By providing the training, sewing machines, the partnership between Ramco Cements and Gram Vikas society helps women see new possibilities for their careers and motivates them to achieve these goals.

Beneficiary Speaks

"This training has opened my eyes to many possibilities. I'm now thinking of starting my own tailoring unit, and I have the confidence to make it happen. I never imagined I could be a business owner."

I want to start my own business and hire people to work for me. I will make a lot of money.

Entrepreneurship: Through workshops in sewing, fashion design, and tailoring, women learn how to create products. While one woman has already successfully launched her own business after completing the training, over 160 participants have expressed a keen interest in starting their own businesses, either from home or in their local communities. By nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset, the programme empowers women to become self-sufficient. However, to further advance their businesses, many participants require additional training. This includes acquiring more advanced skills in product marketing, improving business strategies, and effectively managing day-to-day operations. With these enhanced capabilities, women will be better equipped to reach the wider markets.

Increase in self-confidence: 100% of participants report a significant increase in self-confidence, particularly in making independent decisions and handling financial matters.

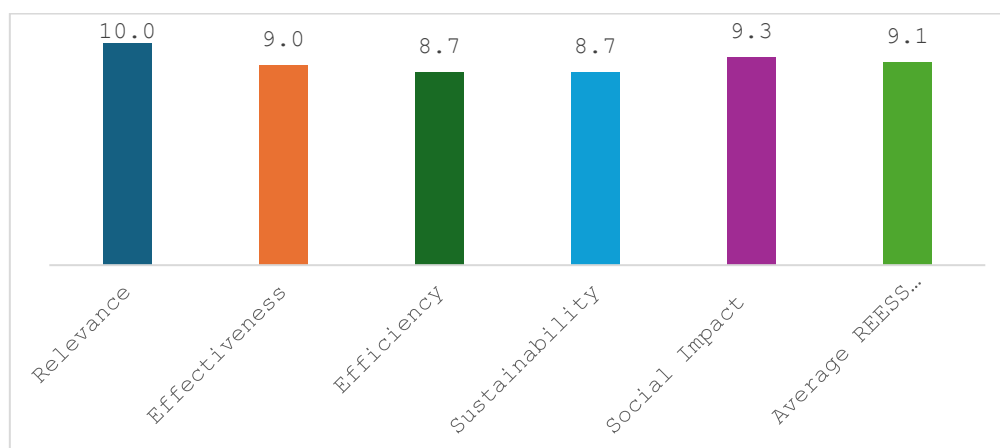
Saving potential: The financial literacy component of the curriculum encourages the women to save and plan for the future by providing basic training on tasks such as opening a bank account and managing finances. Although the women are not currently earning, many have expressed a strong desire to save for important future needs, such as their children's education and to buy assets. This potential for saving lays the groundwork for future financial growth. However, to fully realize this potential, there is a need for more advanced financial literacy training to help them better manage their finances, make informed investment decisions, and achieve long-term financial stability.

Table 7: REESS Ratings

Category	Indicators	Ratings
Relevance	Low levels of women's job opportunities	10
	Market demand	10
	Non-availability of other providers	10
	Alignment with Ramco Cements' CSR mandate	10
	Alignment with participant needs	10
	Application to enrolment ratio	10
	Participant motivation	10
	Demographic profile of the beneficiaries	10
	Alignment with National framework	10
	Alignment with International framework	10
	Average Relevance	10.0
Effectiveness	Overall reach and dropout	9
	Acquisition of new skills	9
	Provision of quality infrastructure and support	9
	Employment outcomes	8
	Curriculum relevance	10
	Beneficiaries who completed the programme	8
	Beneficiary Satisfaction Levels	9
	Partner NGO Capacity	10
	Average Effectiveness	9.0
Efficiency	Affordability	10
	Cost per participant	10
	Optimal utilization of resources	8
	Timely Completion	7
	Planned vs. Achieved milestones	7
	Training batch numbers and completion rate	10
	Monitoring and documentation	8
	Qualification of trainers	10
	Placement percentage	8
	Average Efficiency	8.7
Sustainability	Long-term employment	9
	Community networks and partnerships	9

Category	Indicators	Ratings
	Collaboration with Government schemes	8
	Diversity of donor networks	9
	Alumni follow-up systems	8
	Continued skill building	9
	Average Sustainability	8.7
Social Impact	Women empowerment	10
	Self-reliance and independence	10
	Building community capacity	9
	Overcoming barriers	10
	Economic upliftment	8
	Career aspiration increase	10
	Entrepreneurship	8
	Increase in self-confidence	10
	Saving potential	9
	Average Social Impact	9.3

Figure 15: Overall REESS Score



The programme attained an average REESS rating of 9.1, which is considered excellent, highlighting the positive impact it has had on the women.

9. Alignment with UN SDGs

Ramco Cements' Women Skilling initiative aligns closely with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10. The key details are given below.

- SDG 1: No Poverty:** The programme plays a role in combating poverty by empowering women through skill development and self-employment opportunities. Participants receive training in sewing, tailoring, and related skills, and upon completion, are provided with a domestic sewing machine, enabling them to generate a sustainable income. This reduces their reliance on others and helps break the cycle

of poverty. Additionally, the programme hires women from local communities as trainers, offering them a steady income and contributing to the economic upliftment of the broader community.

- **SDG 5: Gender Equality:** The programme focuses on empowering women, a group often subject to neglect and exploitation, by providing them with opportunities for self-reliance and economic stability. Through this initiative, women gain financial independence and the confidence to challenge societal barriers, promoting gender equality.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** By equipping women with specialized skills in fashion design, tailoring, and embroidery, the programme promotes decent work and self-employment opportunities.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities:** The programme provides vulnerable women in Dharwad who face social and economic disparities with opportunities to overcome these inequalities. By focusing on skill enhancement and self-reliance, it ensures reduced socio-economic inequalities in their communities.
- **SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being:** The financial stability gained through the programme has a ripple effect on the well-being of participants and their families. Economic empowerment reduces stress and enhances mental health.

10. Recommendations

- **Improve timeliness of sewing machine distribution:** Ensuring that machines are handed over within one week of course completion. This will help participants practice their skills, prevent loss of knowledge. To address the delay, a more efficient distribution process should be implemented, removing dependencies on external factors.
- **Address delayed certification:** By initiating assessments within one week after course ends and issuing provisional certificates upon course completion, the programme can ensure that participants can start their work without unnecessary waiting.
- **NSDC Certification:** It is recommended that the programme integrates NSDC certification to maximize its effectiveness and long-term sustainability. By taking this step, Gram Vikas Society can ensure that it continues to meet the evolving needs of rural women and creates lasting economic opportunities.
- **Additional skill enhancement and support:** With 88% of participants expressing interest in advanced training, there is demand for offering additional training courses in specialized areas like advanced tailoring, fashion design, and related fields.
- **Regular updates on trends:** Providing workshops, online resources, or partnerships with more could help participants stay updated and continue to improve after the initial training.
- **Marketing and business support:** Providing specific training on marketing, social media sales strategies, financial management and partnering with local markets, retailers, or e-commerce platforms will empower women to take their skills into the marketplace.
- **Resource centre setup:** Establishing a well-equipped resource centre in each block would allow women to continue improving their skills post-training. A subsidized model funded by donations/corpus funds and run by the alumni as a group enterprise could ensure maximum impact.
- **Expand programme reach:** Increasing the program's accessibility by extending it to more districts and talukas can significantly amplify its impact.
- **Continue monitoring and impact evaluation:** Conducting follow-ups with Alumni beneficiaries will help assess their income generation, business progress, and the challenges they face.
- **Offer stipends:** Given that the women spend more than one month at the centre, providing a nominal stipend can serve as an incentive and encourage participation.
- **Provide training options in specialized skills:** To enhance the success of women in the programme and avoid saturating the market with the same set of skills, it would be prudent to offer advanced training in specialized areas such as Zardosi, Aari embroidery, and stitching to different subgroups of women will ensure a diverse range of marketable talents.

11. Conclusion

The skilling project funded by Ramco Cements and implemented by Gram Vikas Society has proven to significantly impact the lives of the beneficiaries. Through its training programs, the project has empowered women with valuable tailoring and fashion skills, providing them with the confidence and knowledge to explore entrepreneurial opportunities and improve their economic independence. The positive feedback from participants, including increased confidence in managing income and a strong interest in starting businesses, highlights the programme's success in addressing skill gaps and working towards creating sustainable livelihoods. With continued investment and support, this programme has the potential to uplift many more women, contributing to a more inclusive and self-reliant community.