

“There is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women” —Kofi Annan



**Impact Assessment of the
“Self-Employed Tailor”
Training Programme**



**TAILORING-BASED SELF-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING
FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN**
Impact Assessment Report of Skill Training Project – A CSR
Initiative of KNRCL

Presented by Deeksha – Centre for Learning and Action



KNR Constructions Ltd.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE “SELF-EMPLOYED TAILOR”

TRAINING PROGRAMME

A CSR INITIATIVE OF KNRCL

2025

Report Prepared by
Deeksha – Centre for Learning and Action



KNR Constructions Limited,
KNR House, 3rd & 4th Floors,
Plot No. 113 & 114, Phase-1, Kavuri Hills,
Jubilee Hills, Road No.36,
Hyderabad, Telangana – 500033

Deeksha – Centre for Learning and Action,
108, SVP Apartments, Plot 48,
HUDA Complex, Saroornagar,
Hyderabad,
Telangana – 500035

TAILORING-BASED SELF-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

As India advances on its development journey, it is evident that sustainable progress depends on the active participation and empowerment of women. Traditional gender biases, along with limited access to education and employment opportunities have long posed challenges. However, growing awareness and concerted efforts by the government, NGOs and private sector organisations have led to improvement in women's education, vocational training and entrepreneurship. These efforts are helping to build a more inclusive, equitable and dynamic future for everyone.

Skill development and entrepreneurship are powerful tools for empowering women. By acquiring market relevant skills, women enhance their employability, achieve financial independence and contribute significantly to the nation's economy. Entrepreneurship, in particular, enables women to lead businesses, generate employment and challenge entrenched social norms, fostering wider community transformation.

Despite a growing economy, India witnessed a decline in female labour force participation – from 34% to 27%, alongside a persistent 50% gender wage gap. In this context, skill development assumes critical importance, especially for women facing multiple layers of exclusion due to low education, poverty or social barriers. It enhances autonomy, improves household income and supports sustainable livelihoods.

Ultimately, true empowerment involves more than preparing women for the workforce. It requires dismantling systemic barriers, promoting rights awareness and building self-confidence through capacity building. The goal is to strengthen women's overall potential – enabling them to lead independent, dignified, and impactful lives.

CONTEXT

Telangana has made significant strides in women's empowerment through targeted skill development, reflected in female labour force participation rate of 52.7%, well above the national average. While many women remain in informal sectors like agriculture and construction, others

are engaged in unpaid care work and homebased activities. Telangana now leads in industrial employment for women, with women comprising a slightly higher share of the workforce than men. Skill training in sectors like pharmaceuticals, tailoring and IT, especially in rural areas, has enhanced women's employability and income generating opportunities. Tailoring has been particularly transformative, enabling women to work earn from home while balancing domestic responsibilities. Many have started small businesses or joined SHG-led initiatives, only financial independence and social recognition.

However, challenges persist – limited access to finances, weak market linkages, and inadequate post-training support often hindering the growth. Gaps in digital and business literacy also limit their ability to scale or promote their work. In this context, responding to the request of the government representatives, KNR Constructions Limited (KNRCL) has extended support to conduct tailoring training to 1,200 young women across three assembly constituencies in the erstwhile Warangal district, during the year 2023.

KNRCL'S CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

KNR Constructions Limited is of the most trusted multidomain infrastructure company in India, specializing in engineering, procurement and infrastructure (EPC) services. With strong focus on road transportation engineering projects, KNRCL undertakes construction and maintenance of roads, highways, flyovers and bridges, along with projects in irrigation and urban water infrastructure management.

Driven by a vision to deliver eco-friendly and high-quality infrastructure solutions, KNRCL adopts state-of-art practices and emphasizes a collaborative, performance-driven approach. Guided by the belief that “together we progress”, the company actively engages in social development and empowerment activities through its corporate social responsibility division. Key focus areas include *Women's Economic Empowerment, Skill Development for Sustainable Livelihoods and initiatives to enhance Public Safety & Security.*

IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

Complying the CSR rules and regulations under the Companies Act, KNRCL proposed to do the impact assessment of its CSR project of tailoring training course for self-employment. Deeksha –

Centre for Learning and Action (a non-profit organisation working in the areas of Child Rights, Adolescence issues, Health, Livelihoods and Gender equality) has been empaneled for taking up the impact assessment of the said project.

SELF-EMPLOYED TAILOR – A SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The self-employment tailoring training course is designed to equip women with essential tailoring skills for sustainable livelihoods. Through hands-on training in stitching, pattern making and garment design, it promotes economic empowerment and self-reliance. Especially relevant in semi-urban and rural areas, the programme addresses limited job opportunities by meeting the growing demand for custom clothing. Participants also learn basic entrepreneurship, enabling them to start small tailoring units or work independently. The programme aims to:

- Improve employability and income potential
- Build self-confidence and social inclusion
- Support local entrepreneurship and microenterprises

By integrating practical skills with hands-on experience, the program support poverty reduction, empowers women and fosters community development. Towards achieving this, KNRCL has contributed funds from its CSR kitty to conduct tailoring training in 24 batches across three assembly constituencies of the erstwhile Warangal district. The project has been implemented through two local NGOs – Social Agency for Peoples Employment (SAPE) and Centre for Urban and Rural Development (CFURD).

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

KNR Constructions Limited has provided training and material support to 1,200 women beneficiaries across 24 centres in three assembly constituencies, namely Palakurthi, Parakala and Nekkonda. Thus, the study aims to assess the overall impact of the tailoring skill training on various aspects of women's empowerment.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The key objective of the impact assessment study is to analyze the impact of KNRCL's CSR initiative on various aspects of women's empowerment, viz., knowledge and skills, financial independence, decision making, negotiation, entrepreneurship and mobility.

METHODOLOGY

The study is designed in an interactive mode to gather perceptions of the beneficiaries and the trainers, and to analyze the overall impact. The tools used to assess the impact of the intervention are: secondary data analysis – including the evaluation reports, an online questionnaire using google forms, individual interviews, and interactions with the beneficiaries and the trainers.

Stratified Random sampling method is used to understand the impact of the intervention.

SAMPLE

All 24 centres across four mandals were included in the study. Using a stratified sampling method, a sample of 10% trainees from these centres have been identified. While 117 beneficiaries out of 1,171 were identified for the study, ultimately 126 members participated in the study.

LIMITATIONS

Since the training has been done more than a year ago, some of the trainees have changed their phone numbers and some were not working. Hence, the initial sample had to be revised to reach out to the intended sample. Though the study team planned to conduct small group interactions, it could not be taken up due to non-availability of some of the sample beneficiaries identified as they changed their residential location or some got married and left to their marital home, during the gap period.

FINANCIAL OUTLAY

KNRCL has allocated a total of ₹2,00,00,000.00 towards the self-employed tailor skill development course as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

As part of the impact assessment of the Self-Employed Tailor Skill Development Course, supported by KNRCL under its CSR initiative, a field-based study was conducted by the study team across selected training centres in the newly carved Warangal and Hanamkonda districts. Based on the secondary data analysis, an online survey, direct interactions, interviews, and feedback from participants, trainers and implementing partners, the team compiled a set of key observations. These focus on changes in skill acquisition, financial autonomy, decision-making,

mobility and entrepreneurial readiness among the beneficiaries. The findings aim to highlight the broader social and economic implications of the initiative and inform future programme enhancements. Major insights from the secondary data analysis, interactions and interviews are presented below:

Ψ GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- The field area spans three assembly constituencies and covers four mandals which fall under three different districts.
- Some of the centres also catered to aspiring women from nearby villages or hamlets.
- Each batch was planned to train 50 participants, but the actual number varied from 31 to 51 with the majority of centres having between 45 to 50 trainees.
- The training programme lasted one month, and the trainers moved from one centre to another after completion of the schedule at a particular centre.
- The project was implemented in partnership with two local organisations, namely Social Agency for Peoples Employment (SAPE) and Centre for Urban and Rural Development (CFURD), benefitting a total of 1,200 women.
- SAPE organized training centres in Warangal district, covering 12 centres, while CFURD conducted training in Hanamkonda and Janagoan district, also covering 12 centres.
- There were 10 centres in Parkal mandal, namely Cherlapalli, Choutuparthi, Kantathmakur, Kowkonda, Nadikuda, Nagaram, Narlapur, Narasakkapally, Raiparthy and Varikole. Two batches were conducted at the Varikole centre. Altogether, a total of 501 trainees attended the course across 11 batches in these centres.
- Training was conducted in two mandals of Palakurthi constituency, covering 11 batches across six centres in Raiparthy mandal – Kothur, Raiparthy, Perikaid, Sannur, Thirumalapalle, Katrapalli; and five centres in Kodakandla mandal – Authapur, Kodakandla, Peddavangara, Ramavaram school, Ramavaram Rythu Vedika. A total of 570 participants were trained in these centres.

- In Nekkonda mandal there were two centres, namely Nagaram and Redlawada. A total of 100 trainees attended the course in these two centres.
- A total of 1,200 women enrolled and 1,171 attended the one-month training course.
- The training was conducted in 24 batches, with an average of 50 participants per batch, to accommodate all the trainees.
- The training included both theory and practical sessions with a significant portion of time allocated to hands-on practice. It was conducted in a collaborative format where trainees were grouped and learned together, supporting one another throughout the process.
- All trainees were provided with sewing machines upon completion of the training course.

DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE TRAINEES

- ❖ Of 1,171 beneficiaries, 107 are within the age group of 18 to 20, while 305 members are in the 21 to 25 age group, 333 were in 26 to 30 age group, 265 were in 31 to 35 age group and 127 were in the age group of 36 to 40. Another 16 members were between 41 to 50 years of age. 18 members did not mention their age during the admission process.
- ❖ Out of 1,171 trainees, all except four provided their caste details. Nearly 59% (684) of the participants belonged to Backward Castes, about 32% (372) were from Scheduled Castes, just under 5% (53) were scheduled tribes and approximately 5% (58) belonged to general category.
- ❖ Among the trainees, 428 have studied up to class 10, while 248 had education below SSC level. A total of 252 trainees had completed intermediate or junior college education, while 218 held a bachelor degree and 22 had pursued either post-graduation or diploma in any field. Three participants did not provide their educational qualification.
- ❖ The majority of participants were married. However, a smaller segment, primarily those in their early 20s or younger, indicated that they preferred to focus on building their career before considering marriage.
- ❖ Almost all of the trainees came from rural villages and tribal thandas, except for a very few who resided in Palakurthi, a small town notified as a Census Town in Janagoan district of Telangana.

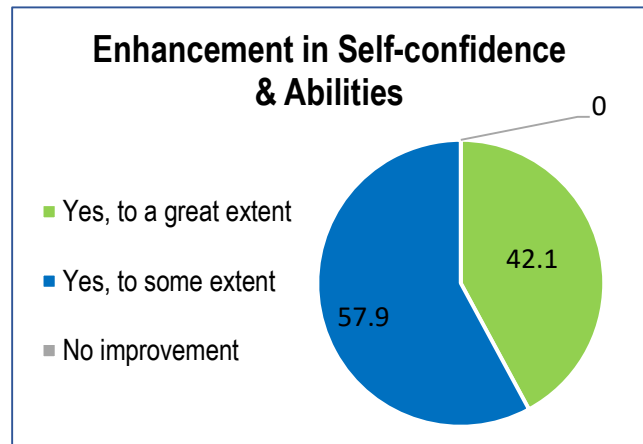
Ψ KEY OUTCOMES OF THE ONLINE SURVEY

- ✓ An online survey was conducted with a 10% sample using Google forms. A questionnaire was developed and the link was shared with the identified sample beneficiaries on the phone numbers provided during their admission into the course.
- ✓ A short background note was prepared to inform recipients about the purpose of the survey. The link was placed at the end of the message to ensure participants understand its intent. It was sent as an SMS, assuming this would be a more effective method given the beneficiaries' profile.
- ✓ The survey link was initially shared with 117 beneficiaries, in line with the planned sample size. However, challenges such as changed or inactive phone numbers necessitated extending the outreach to additional participants. As a result, 126 valid responses were received within the stipulated time frame.
- ✓ About 43% of the respondents were in the 26-30 age group, followed by 26% in the 21-25 age group, a little over 18% in the 31-35 age group, and 11% were above 35 years of age. Interestingly, only two individuals from the age group of 20 and below responded to the survey.
- ✓ The majority of respondents (59%) belonged to Backward Castes, while 23% were from Scheduled castes and 12% from Scheduled Tribes. There were eight respondents from the General category.
- ✓ The education status of the respondents was as follows: 39.7% had completed their 10th standard, while about 16% had not reached the school final level. Around 21.4% had studied up to Intermediate, 19.8% had completed their graduation and only one respondent had pursued a post-graduation course. Three beneficiaries had completed other courses like diplomas in various fields.
- ✓ The marital status of the majority (94.4%) of respondents was married, while less than 5% were unmarried.
- ✓ Notably, 40% of the participants responded that the training significantly improved their tailoring skills, while 58.7% said it helped enhance their skills to some extent. Interestingly,

two participants felt that the training did not help improve their tailoring skills due to insufficient time to learn effectively.

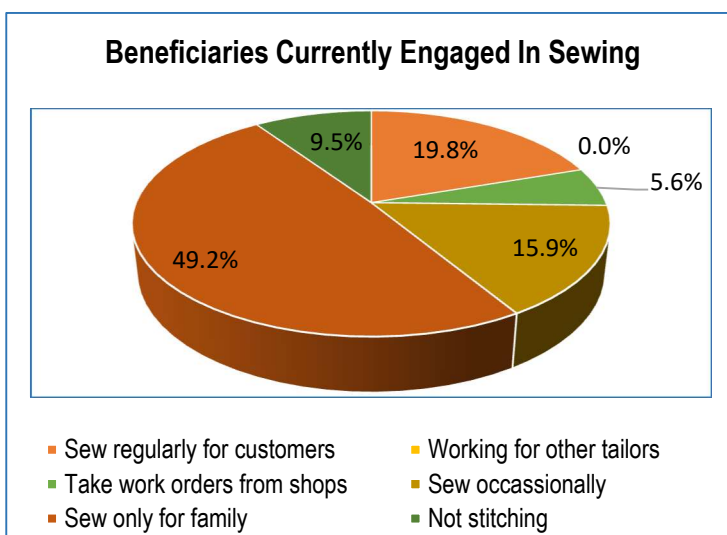
- ✓ Responding to the question on improvement in income source, 14.3% of the respondents mentioned that the opportunities had increased greatly, while 78% said they had improved to a reasonable extent. However, about 8% respondents reported that the training did not provide any opportunity to enhance their income sources.

- ✓ Interestingly, the training significantly enhanced self-confidence and abilities among 42% of the respondents, while the remaining 58% also reported noticeable improvement. Notably, none of the participants selected 'No' for this question. This suggests that such trainings programmes play a meaningful role in empowering women.



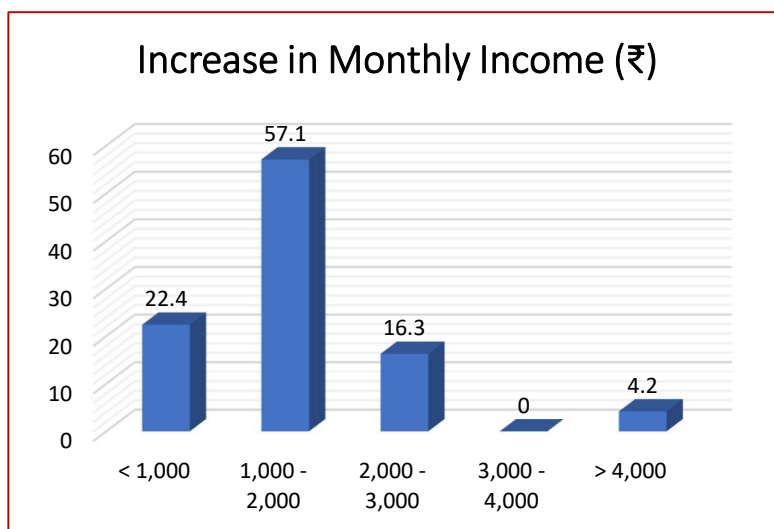
- ✓ A total of 68.3% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the training because trainers repeated instructions until the learner understood. About 19% appreciated the teaching methods, describing them as helpful and easy to follow. For 7%, satisfaction stemmed from learning various models, while others highlighted that peer learning opportunities also played a role in enhancing their skills.
- ✓ However, for 31% of the sample, the training was only moderately satisfying. They felt that the duration was insufficient to learn all the required skills and preferred to have more time to practice. Nearly one-fifth of these respondents also wished to learn additional models during the training.
- ✓ It is worth noting that almost half of the respondents were using their newly learnt skill and the sewing machines they received to stitch clothes for the family members, thereby saving money – an effort appreciated by the entire family.

- ✓ About 20% of the respondents were regularly stitching clothes for others, while another 16% were doing so occasionally, mostly stitching blouses, saree falls, and similar items during festive and wedding seasons.



- ✓ Around 5.5% of the sample had adopted an entrepreneurial approach, using their newly acquired skills to secure work orders and earn income on a regular basis. In contrast, 9.5% were not utilizing their training, often due to issues such as malfunctioning sewing machines. Interestingly, none of the participants were employed under others tailors.
- ✓ A majority (94%) of the beneficiaries who took up tailoring as income generating activity reported that there has been an increase in their income from tailoring work. The remaining 6% mentioned that there is no increase in their income, as they were stitching for other only occasionally and did not receive much work.

- ✓ In response to a question about the monthly increase in income, 57% mentioned that they were



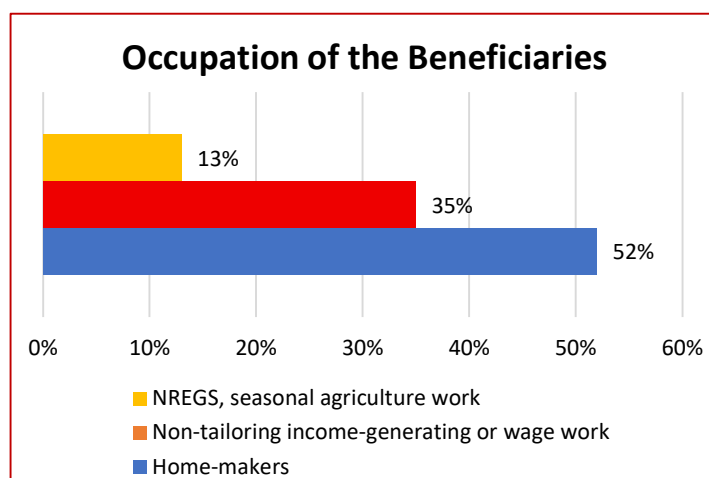
earning ₹1,000 to ₹2,000 more than their previous income. Slightly over 16% reported an increase is between ₹2,000 to ₹3,000, and another 4% experienced a substantial rise of over ₹4,000 per month. However, a significant number of respondents (22.4%) reported only a marginal

increase of less than ₹1,000 in their monthly income.

- ✓ Responding to the question about their current income, 43% reported earning between ₹2,000 and ₹3,000 per month, while about 39% earned up to ₹2,000. More than 8% were earning between ₹3,000 to ₹4,000, and 4% reported a monthly income of over ₹4,000.
- ✓ Overall, one fifth (20%) of the survey participants expressed the highest level of satisfaction by giving the training 1st rank. A majority (>60%) gave it a 2nd rank, while 13.5% ranked it 3rd. Four respondents gave it a 4th rank, stating they were unable to learn to their full potential, and one person gave it a 5th rank as she could not complete the course due to personal reasons.

Ψ INSIGHTS FROM SECONDARY DATA

- A quick evaluation conducted immediately after the course revealed that 90% of the beneficiaries were exposed to sewing skills for the first time, whereas the remaining 10% possessed some basic skills before joining the course.
- Almost all participants were unaware of the job market and entrepreneurial opportunities, except for a few (less than 1%) who owned sewing machines but lacked proficiency in tailoring.
- Of the sample, 52% (69 beneficiaries) were homemakers with minimal participation in income-generating work. About 35% were engaged in non-tailoring occupations, such as agriculture labour, home-based retail business or other income-generation activities like milk sale, saree sales, running small provision shops, etc. The remaining participants were occasionally worked under NREGS or took up seasonal agricultural works.



- Overall, nearly 60% were largely financially dependent on their spouses.
- It is noteworthy that about 43% of the trainees reported having no income prior to joining the skill training. However, 46% were earning around ₹3,000 per month through various forms of wage works.

- The reports indicate that regardless of their educational qualifications, all beneficiaries lacked job-specific or employable skills. As a result, they found this self-employed course valuable and were eager to enhance their employability.
- The trainees hoped to use this opportunity to secure suitable jobs or self-employment opportunities in the textile or garment industry in their local areas. Most of them expressed a desire to work from home and sought support in obtaining job orders, such as uniform making, stitching assignments. They also viewed the training as an opportunity for both personal as well as professional development.
- A majority of participants (63%) anticipated improved economic opportunities, 22% saw the training as a pathway to self-employment and about 15% considered it a potential fulltime profession for them.
- Nevertheless, all participants viewed the training as a potential source of sustainable income.
- Everyone expressed that the training was interactive and engaging. They also noted that the learning environment was conducive and collaborative, with a healthy sense of competition that motivated them to excel in the skills they were acquiring.
- Nearly all trainees (89%) rated the instructors' performance as excellent, while 11% described it as fairly good and helpful for effective skill development. All participants mentioned that the trainers were supportive, providing valuable guidance and mentorship to help them become professionals.
- Regarding the location of the training centre, participants unanimously felt that the centres were easily accessible, which enabled them to attend and actively participate in the training.
- According to the trainees, the training material was useful, sufficient and the content was well-structured. They maintained class notes and kept record of the models they learned.
- Almost all the respondents expressed that they understood the job potential in the market. About 86% mentioned that the training was highly relevant and of good quality, while 14% said that it helped them gain professional skills and met their expectation.
- As reflected in the reports, the beneficiaries shared that they are now receive greater respect in their families and communities due to their newly acquired skills and are approached by customers with dignity.

- All the trainees expressed utmost happiness upon receiving sewing machine and tool kit to practice tailoring skills. They felt that they without access to these machines, they might lose the skills they had learned. They stated that this provision created an immediate opportunity to start earning by taking up job works.
- Some beneficiaries found opportunities to work with larger tailoring shops and readymade garment sellers. Those who began tailoring as home-based self-employment revealed that their income is gradually increasing, especially during festive and marriage seasons when work peaks. They were optimistic that offering different designs for various age groups and both genders would provide a good income source within their villages.
- All of them mentioned that this new income source has improved their status within their families. They are now able to spend on their own well-being without depending on their spouses for expenses. Additionally, they have started saving money, albeit in small amounts, for their future needs.

GIST OF THE PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

- ❖ The assessment team interviewed more than 50% (62) of the sample identified for online survey. All of them were contacted by phone and individually interviewed using a structured set of guiding questions developed for the purpose.
- ❖ Nearly 80% of the respondents were using their newly learnt skills to stitch clothes for their families, thereby saving an average of ₹1000 to ₹1500 per month. Additionally, they expressed a great sense of satisfaction and pride when seeing their family members comfortably wearing those clothes they had stitched.
- ❖ Majority of these participants are using their own designs and also experimenting with new models. They shared that they are able to express their creativity and skill, especially while making clothes for their children.
- ❖ The interviewees stated that they are now respected and valued by their family members for their contribution and for showcasing their skills through stitching clothes for the household.
- ❖ Some women mentioned that their neighbours and relatives had begun requesting them to stitch clothes. However, they declined initially, preferring to practice more and achieve perfection

before taking on others' garments, as they did not want to risk making mistakes. Nonetheless, a few of these women had already started accepting such requests and were occasionally stitching for others.

- ❖ About 10% of the interviewed beneficiaries were also stitching clothes for others in their village. They shared that despite initial hesitation they were able to satisfy their customers. This brought them recognition in their community and neighbourhood, and one could hear the pride in their voice as they shared these experiences.
- ❖ They are anticipating an increase in demand for their work with the upcoming marriage and festive season.
- ❖ Three of the beneficiaries described tailoring as a business and felt that it was not only earning them social status but also allowing them to make reasonable savings from their income.
- ❖ For most of participants, this was the first time they had stepped out for an extended period after marriage, especially to learn a new skill. They all mentioned that this experience significantly boosted their confidence and earned them increased trust and support from their marital families.
- ❖ All the interviewees responded saying that the training has enhanced their self-confidence and self-esteem. They shared that mingling with many people, interacting regularly, and engaging in meaningful discussions had opened up a new world for them.
- ❖ Many participants shared that the experience provided them with the space to think critically, express their views and explore new aspects of life. Exposure to broader social and personal issues helped widen their perspective on a range of subjects.
- ❖ For many, it was an opportunity to become more independent – in terms of mobility, managing their own situations, and offering mutual moral support. It boosted their morale and fostered solidarity and sisterhood among the participants, generating a sense of collective energy, as reflected in the interviews.
- ❖ About 48% of the respondents admitted that balancing household responsibilities with uninterrupted attendance at the training was a challenge. However, they were happy to have successfully completed the course.

- ❖ For around 44% of the interviewees, managing time was not particularly difficult despite their family responsibilities, as they received support from their spouses or other family members.
- ❖ Three beneficiaries shared that their health has improved since they stopped working in outdoor environments. By choosing tailoring as their source of income, they are now protected from exposure to heat and dust.

Bhavana (name changed), aged 31, had to discontinue her high school education. Married for 14 years and a mother of two, she worked hard in agriculture fields, braving sun and rain without complaint. But when she developed a severe skin sensitivity and painful sunburns, she was forced to stop wage work, a decision that hit the family's financial condition hard. Her husband's income was just enough to cover basic needs, but with growing expenses, especially for the children's education, the pressure mounted. In an effort to contribute, Bhavana tried making pickles and *papads* at home, but that too affected her health.

It was then she heard about free tailoring training being offered in her own village. Without hesitation, she enrolled. With great enthusiasm, she learned the skill and practiced diligently. She began by stitching dresses for her children and soon became known for her neat finishing and designer touches. Today, Bhavana earns over ₹4,000 a month through tailoring. Her health has improved, and with it came peace of mind. With much delight, she says, *"tailoring training came to me as a blessing, just when I needed it most, for my health and my family's future. I will be grateful to KNRCL, it truly changed my life."*

- ❖ Close to 6% of the respondents reported that they had stopped going for wage work outside including NREGS work, as they were now earning a similar amount through tailoring while working from home.
- ❖ Notably, 87% of the interviewees reported an improvement in their economic condition, either through additional income or by saving on clothing expenses through home stitching. Their contributions are now recognized by the family members, which has enhanced their sense of self-worth.

Anusha (name changed) is a mother of two daughters attending junior college. While they were in school, clothing wasn't a concern due to school uniforms. But college required daily wear, which increased the family expenses. Her husband was unhappy about this change and became

irritable, although he didn't take it out on their daughters. To avoid asking him money, Anusha took hand loans from others. However, the need to repay them forced her to work longer hours, leading to tension at home.

Tailoring training brought a solution. She began stitching clothes for her daughters using her own sarees. As her skills improved, she started taking sewing orders from others. She managed household chores, farm work and tailoring efficiently. Her income slowly grew, and financial pressures eased. She proudly says, "*saving money is equal to earning... and I am doing both now!*" Her husband now supports her by helping with household work, and they live more peacefully.

- ❖ Except for four members, receiving the certificate was an exciting moment for everyone, as it added credibility to their profile and opened up self-employment opportunities. The four participants who had not yet received their course completion certificates requested the interviewer to help facilitate the process.
- ❖ A few women who already had basic tailoring skills and prior stitching experience mentioned that they had expected more advanced coaching during this training. However, they were still satisfied, as they gained formal technical training and became eligible to start their own enterprise.
- ❖ Apart from these few, all participants felt that the training duration was insufficient to learn all the stitching models thoroughly. They also mentioned that limited time prevented them from practicing under guidance to achieve perfection. They requested an additional phase training to learn more and newer models.
- ❖ The majority of participants inquired about opportunities for further training and expressed a strong desire to attend an advanced tailoring course.
- ❖ During the interviews with selected beneficiaries, it was observed that their family members were encouraging them to participate and share their experiences. This is a positive indication of an enabling environment that supports women's participation.
- ❖ Almost all the participants stated that the training had significantly enhanced their confidence levels and courage. They also shared that it brought dignity to their lives, equipping them with

a valuable skill and providing them with a tangible resource in the form of a sewing machine and tool kit.

I was once very shy and had very few friends. After marriage, I felt lonely and disconnected. I didn't work outside but helped on our family farm. I had difficulty adjusting to my new home and lost interest in daily life.

Rama teacher encouraged me to join tailoring training, which completely changed me. I gained confidence, made new friends and started earning through stitching work, now, I speak up for myself, and my family treats me with respect! – Saritha (name changed), 22 years

- ❖ Every participant received a sewing machine along with all the necessary tools to begin full-fledged employment, either through self-employment or by working for others, to support their financial development.
- ❖ However, around 10% of the interviewed beneficiaries faced challenges with their sewing machines, which had become non-functional due to persistent technical issues. Despite their effort to have the machines repaired, including seeking assistance from technicians at their mandal headquarters, their problems remained unresolved. As a result, they have requested that the machines be replaced so that they can resume their tailoring work and continue earning an income.
- ❖ Interestingly, a couple of beneficiaries who were neither contacted for the interview nor for the online survey reached out to the assessment team on their own, asking why they had not been included. After the study process was explained, they insisted on sharing their views, which ultimately validated the responses already collected.

CHALLENGES

- ⇒ The online survey required contacting each and every individual in the selected sample. Since the sample was large, the assessment team had to invest considerable time and effort to reach out and explain the survey's objectives to the beneficiaries.
- ⇒ Due to concerns about digital frauds in the State, the assessment team had to put in extra effort to build trust and clearly explain the purpose of the survey before obtaining consent from participants. In a few cases, the beneficiaries' husbands or elder brothers took the phone and

stated outright that they did not want to get into any trouble by accessing the link. As a result, they prevented the women from participating in the online survey, despite evidences supporting its legitimacy. This process was quite laborious and took much longer than anticipated.

- ⇒ Since all participants were from rural areas and engaged in diverse activities such as livestock management and agriculture work, the assessment team had to make repeated calls to reach beneficiaries at suitable times, often late evening, early morning or during nights.
- ⇒ Most of the beneficiaries do not have personal phones and rely on their spouses' or children's phone numbers for communication. In many cases, the contact numbers provided at the time of admission were often in the possession of their spouses, who were usually at work sites, or with their children, who were mostly out of village. Consequently, reaching a single participant often required two to five call attempts, consuming considerable time and effort.
- ⇒ Another significant challenge was changes in phone numbers and some phone numbers being non-functional. In these cases, the trainers and active beneficiaries played an invaluable role by helping the team connect with the respondents.

CONCLUSION

The tailoring training program, implemented under KNRCL's CSR initiative, has had a positive and transformative impact on women, primarily from rural and tribal communities. Most participants, many with limited or no prior experience in sewing or employable skills, successfully acquired practical tailoring competencies. This resulted in enhanced self-confidence, increased economic participation, and greater social recognition within their families and communities.

The provision of sewing machine and toolkits facilitated immediate application of skills, enabling many beneficiaries to initiate home-based tailoring and earn supplementary income. Several participants reported increased monthly earnings and improved financial independence. The training also fostered a collaborative learning environment, encouraging peer support and mutual growth, which further contributed to the empowerment of the participants.

The intervention impacted multiple dimensions of women's empowerment. Economically, most beneficiaries saw increased income or savings, with some venturing into entrepreneurial roles. Socially, they gained greater respect within their households and communities, while

psychologically, their self-worth and confidence grew. Access to both skills and resources enhanced their employability and self-employment prospects. Many also reported greater autonomies in decision-making and better household management.

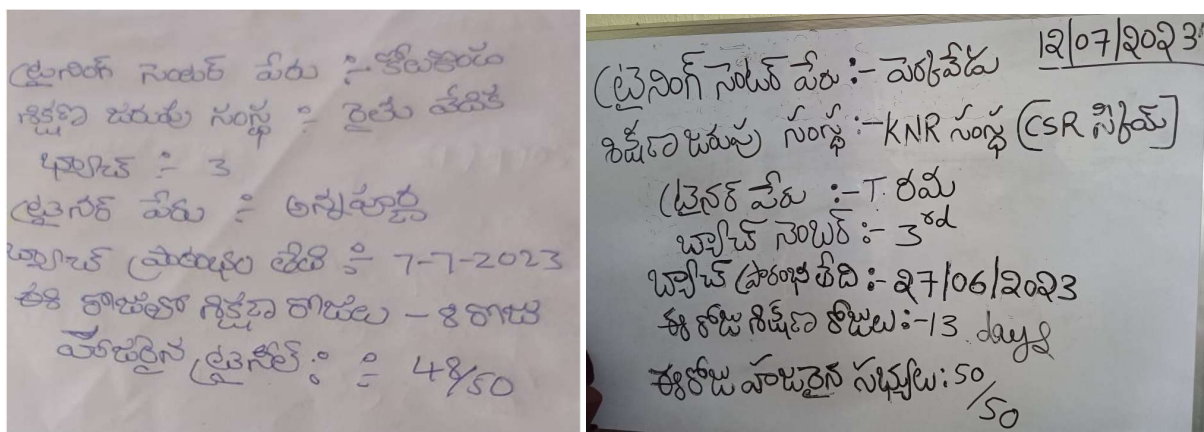
To build on these achievements, it is recommended that future CSR efforts include extended and advanced training modules that allow participants to master more complex tailoring models. Additionally, timely technical support and maintenance services for sewing machines would ensure uninterrupted application of the skills acquired.

Overall, KNRCL's initiative has effectively addressed critical skill deficits and opened avenues for sustainable self-employment among women. It has significantly contributed to their socio-economic upliftment by strengthening their economic roles, enhancing their social standing, and reinforcing their personal agency. Continued investment in advanced skill training, and structured post-training support will help deepen impact and ensure sustained beneficiary engagement.

VISUAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIANING PROGRAMME



Pic 1 – Participants proudly showcasing the garments they stitched during the training



Pic 2 – Display boards presenting training details and daily attendance



Pic 3 – Live demonstration during a practical training session



Pic 4 – Trainees engaged in an informal exchange at the Narsakkapalli training centre



Pic 5 – A small group of trainees involved in practical skill-building



Pic 6 – Participants from one batch displaying their completed stitching models



Pic 7 – Blouse cutting demonstration based on measurements



Pic 8 – Trainees attentively observing stitching techniques during a practical class



Pic 9 – Full class in action – Trainees practicing their newly learned skills



Pic 10 – Light moments shared during a break in the training at Rayaparathi



Pic 11 – Banner displaying details of the training supported under KNRC's CSR initiative



Pic 12 – Practical session illustrating the 'Learning by Doing' approach



Pic 13 – Cheerful trainees presenting their finished project work



Pic 14 – KNRCL team interacting with beneficiaries at the training centre in Varikole village

"Every woman's success should be an inspiration to another. We're strongest when we cheer each other on." - Serena Williams

& & & &