



iTrain Program
Berger Paints Limited

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

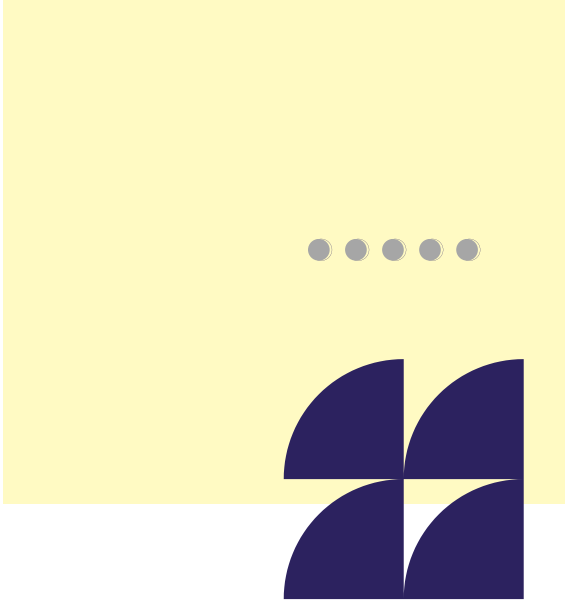
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Report by

SOCIAL LENS
OPTIMISE IMPACT



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Executive Summary



Skill development plays a crucial role in the economic and social advancement of every nation. The proficiency of the workforce not only impacts productivity and income levels but also influences their adaptability in a changing environment. India faces a pressing need for skilled workers. However, a mismatch in skills may impede full employment and hinder economic recovery.

The paint and coating industry is witnessing remarkable growth, leading to a surge in demand for skilled painters. However, the industry is concurrently grappling with a shortage of skilled painters, particularly in the domain of paint application. The scarcity of formal training opportunities and insufficient provisions for painter training are key factors contributing to the shortage of skilled workers in the paint industry.

The report outlines the findings of an impact assessment study conducted through interviews with painters who received training from both fixed and mobile centres of the iTrain Program. The impact assessment findings demonstrate the significant positive effects of the iTrain Program on the participating painters. **A notable outcome is the increased confidence reported by 77.17% of the painters, leading to career advancements for 70.65% of them and an increase in clients for 77.39% due to enhanced soft skills.** The program has had a key economic impact, with **100% of participants noting improved incomes, enabling better access to utilities, high-quality food, children's education, and asset acquisition.** The program successfully enhances professionalism within the industry and makes it more appealing as a career option for newcomers.

Moreover, the iTrain Program has played a crucial role in empowering painters to become entrepreneurs and grow their painting businesses. **Participants who consistently attended iTrain sessions have expanded their service offerings, customer reach, and team size, with an average team growth of 12 members per contractor. Another notable achievement of the program is the enhanced accessibility to training provided by the mobile iTrain vans.** Insights gathered from discussions with the Smile Foundation team, trainers, and trainees underscore the critical role of mobile training in delivering comprehensive, market-aligned training to individuals in remote areas, who would otherwise not have access to such opportunities.

Additionally, **there have been initiatives to promote the involvement of women in the program, resulting in increased participation in various locations such as Bhuj, Shillong, Jawai, Guwahati, and Ghadchiroli.** In these locations, efforts to encourage women's participation in the iTrain Program have focused on providing tailored support and creating a conducive environment for their involvement. Specialised outreach programs and community engagement initiatives have been implemented to raise awareness and address specific challenges faced by women in accessing training opportunities.

In conclusion, the iTrain Program has emerged as a transformative initiative in the paint and coating industry, addressing the critical need for skilled painters while enhancing their professional development and economic prospects. The program's impact is evident in the increased confidence, career advancements, and improved incomes reported by participants. The trainees have recommended incorporating hard-copy training modules and restructuring training hours and content. These suggestions can further enhance the program's impact and effectiveness.

Background

The paint industry in India is experiencing robust growth, projected to reach USD 15.04 billion by 2029, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.38%¹. A significant portion of this market, about 75%, is attributed to decorative paints, which not only contribute to 0.4% of the GDP but also provide employment opportunities in both organised and unorganised sectors². This growth is driven by various factors such as the booming construction industry, and a growing demand for aesthetically pleasing homes.

Despite the manufacturing process of paint being relatively automated and not labour-intensive, its application requires skilled labour. India is home to an estimated 25-30 lakh paint applicators (painters), with the household painters (decorative painters) constituting nearly 75% of this workforce. The majority of painters in the industry are self-taught or have acquired their skills through informal apprenticeships, lacking formal certification or avenues for further skill development in an industry that is rapidly evolving with new technologies in paints and their application.³

The increasing demand for skill proficiency, which has risen by 25% in the last year and is expected to reach 41% by 2025 for all types of courses, highlights the urgent need for upskilling across various industries, including the painting sector. This aligns with the global goal of equitable skill development, as recommended by the 4th Sustainable Development Goal on education, with benefits including cost reduction, improved worker safety, and a more motivated workforce.⁴

To address the skill gap in the painting industry, the Government of India has launched initiatives such as the Skill India Mission and the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, focusing on upskilling technical and soft skills. These initiatives extend to the painting industry, offering courses, internships, and apprenticeships to painters across the country.

One notable opportunity for the paint industry's growth lies in the inclusion of more women. Currently, only 37% of the working Indian female population participates in the labour force. By encouraging more women to join and removing restrictions on their participation in labour-intensive industries, the industry's growth potential could increase significantly, positioning India as a talent force to be reckoned with in the coming years.⁵

¹ India Paints And Coatings Market Insights (n.d)

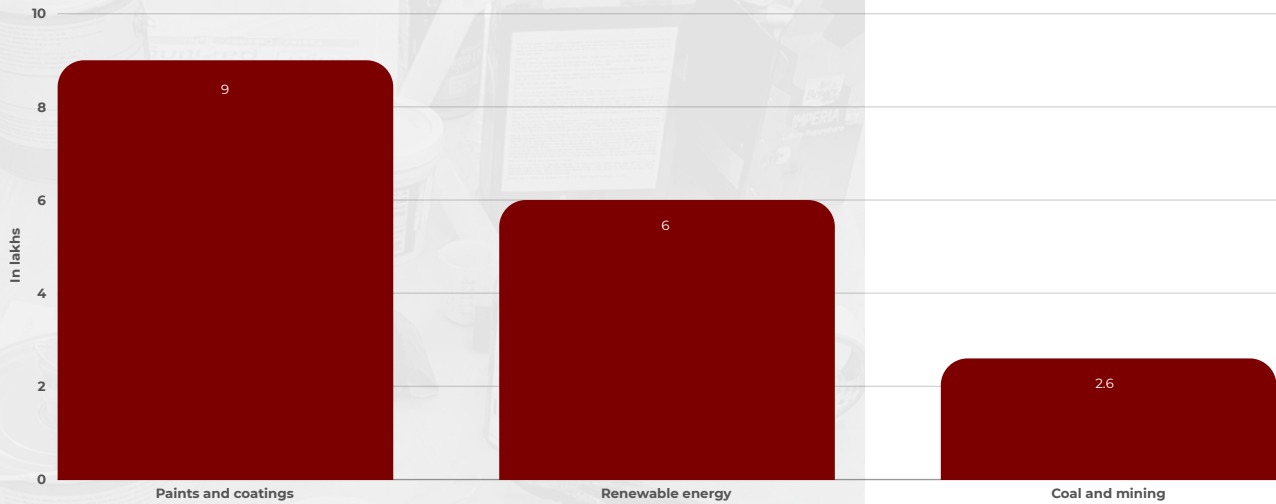
² India Skills Report. (2023)

³ Paints and Coatings Skill Council Annual Report. (2023)

⁴ THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development. (n.d). <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁵ Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report (2022-2023)

Incremental sector-wise needs



(Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Annual Report 2020-21)

Despite these efforts, challenges persist due to the lack of formal training and inadequate provisions for painter training, leading to a shortage of skilled labour and capital in the paint industry. However, a combined effort from the public and private sectors has increased the number of skilled painters in the country from 1.7 million in 2013-14 to around 3 million by 2023-24, though more progress is needed.⁶

The iTrain Program by Berger Paints India Limited addresses these industry challenges. It aims to provide training to painters, focusing on technical skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and market connections. This program has a dual objective: upskilling painters to support national skill development while empowering them to earn a better standard of living.

The iTrain Program includes both fixed and mobile centres to ensure accessibility to painters, especially those in remote locations. Mobile centres, equipped with tools and materials, conduct training sessions remotely using an iTrain van. The program envisions creating a skilled painting community and contributes to economic development through increased productivity and innovation. By reducing unemployment and creating a more skilled workforce, the iTrain Program aligns with national objectives. It also aims to encourage more women to participate in the painting industry, making it more accessible to them. The iTrain Program offers technical skills training in painting, water-proofing, and polishing, along with introducing painters to various products, painting processes, and techniques. Soft skills training is also provided, focusing on communication, time management, budgeting, professionalism, meeting customer expectations, and customer management.

⁶ Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Annual Report (2020-21)

Program Cardinals

In response to the challenges faced by the painting sector in India, Berger Paints Limited is implementing the iTrain Program in collaboration with Smile Foundation. The program aims to offer top-notch training in modern painting techniques and related services, creating a skilled workforce of future painters who are ready for employment.

The iTrain Program seeks to broaden painters' employment opportunities, ultimately improving their quality of life. The iTrain Program has expanded its reach through a mobile training program, ensuring accessibility for painters from rural and remote areas.

The iTrain Program has set up fixed training centres in 47 locations across the country, equipped with modern amenities. The program provides both theoretical and practical training, offering materials, equipment, and tools for hands-on learning. This comprehensive training improves the employability and job readiness of painters, strengthens their connections and networks to enhance employment prospects, and raises the standard of living and professionalism in the painting industry. Ultimately, this contributes to improving the quality of life for painters and their communities.

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

Berger Paints India Ltd. implemented the iTrain Program in 2014

Program outreach in 47 centres across 20 states

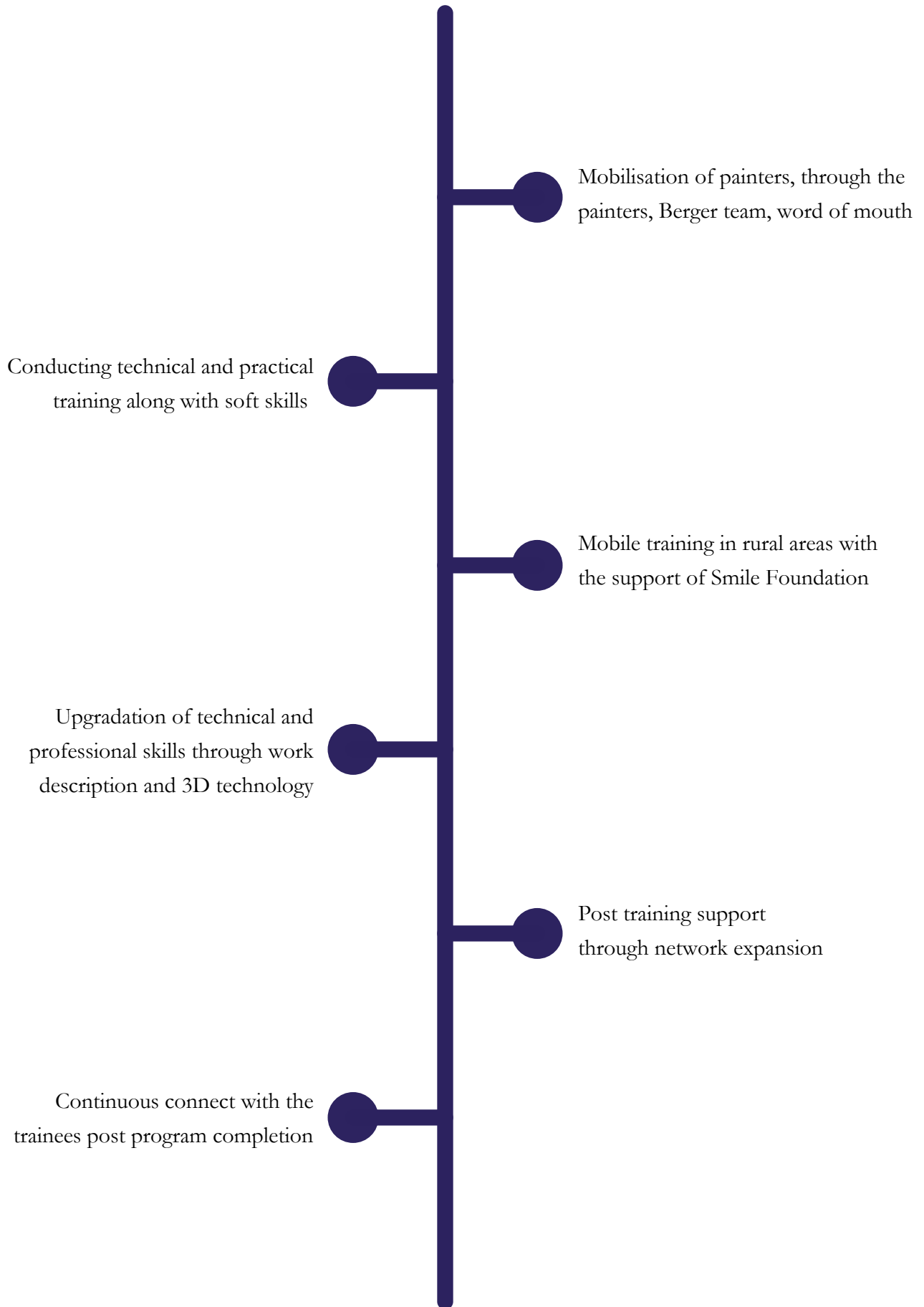
Trained 1,32,727 beneficiaries through the iTrain Program


Partnership with Smile Foundation for mobile training in rural and remote locations was implemented in 2021

Upskilling painters through modern training and techniques



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE




PRACTICAL AREA

Methodology

This report presents the results of the evaluation of Berger Paints iTrain Program for the period of 2023-2024. The Assessor agency, Social Lens Consulting, was brought on board to assess the outcomes and impact of the program from a third-party perspective.

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the iTrain Program in achieving its stated goals and objectives, particularly in producing a skilled workforce of job-ready painters and enhancing their employability.
- Determine the extent to which the iTrain Program has reached its target population, including painters in rural and remote areas, and assess the accessibility of training opportunities provided.
- Assess the outcomes and impact of the iTrain Program on participants, including improvements in skills, employment status, income levels, and overall quality of life.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the iTrain Program, including aspects of program design, implementation, and delivery, to inform future improvements and enhancements.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE

STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

The stakeholders involved in the program are listed below

Direct beneficiaries	Immediate indirect stakeholders	Stakeholders for implementation	Other
Painters	Trainers, Dealers	Business Development team, Implementing Agency, Program Team	Painting Community

OUR VIEW OF IMPACT

Themes	Sub-themes of evaluation
Technical knowledge and skill proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical knowledge and skills • Efficiency and productivity of tasks/projects • Adoption of advanced tools and machines for greater productivity • Workplace safety
Accessibility of training in rural locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of trainings • Livelihood opportunities generated within rural communities
Socio-economic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income changes • Standard of living of the families/household (ownership of assets, improvement in access to basic necessities such as electricity, food etc.) • Avenues for work opportunities • Team size/ leadership
Non-technical skill development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Client management practice • Project management
Women Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to training • Financial independence

Our Approach & Sampling

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RESEARCH

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach involving the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis was drawn from primary and secondary research. A careful examination of the program literature was undertaken to understand the organisation's objectives and methodologies used. This was used in the design of the assessment tools and indicators and to develop a basis for evaluating any gaps and challenges faced. A review of reports published by the government (e.g. reports of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship), NPO studies (e.g. reports produced by the Smile Foundation), social enterprises and independent studies to establish project relevance with respect to employment statistics and skilling needs.

A multi-stakeholder approach was adopted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the program. Through participatory research, the study collected and analysed qualitative and quantitative data from painters, trainers and the project management team. Contextualised tools were designed for each stakeholder in alignment with their engagement with the program. The primary research involved:

- On-field surveys and interviews with a sample of beneficiaries (painters, contractors) directly involved in the intervention
- On-field interviews with the program field level staff and management team and other stakeholders



SAMPLE SELECTION

A random sample of study participants was selected for this assessment through the multi-stage cluster sampling approach. The sample size for the primary program participants was determined through a sample size calculator that is based on:

- Sampling Confidence Level of 95 percent: A percentage that reveals how confident one can be that the population would select an answer within a specific range.
- Margin of Error of 5 percent: A percentage that indicates how much one can expect one's survey results to reflect the views of the overall population. The smaller the margin of error, the closer one is to having the exact answer at a given confidence level.

The distribution of the achieved sample is presented below

Stakeholder	Sample covered
Painters	480
Trainers	11
Business Development team, Implementing Agency, Program Team	10
Senior team members at Berger Paints Limited Head Office	4



SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT 2024

Results: Outcomes & Impact

iTrain Program

KEY RESULTS AT A GLANCE



Contractors engaged in the iTrain Program reported an average increase in team size of 12 members



Most commonly attended sessions across locations were: theoretical sessions on paints and their applications, textures and waterproofing



77.17% of the trainees reported an increase in their confidence levels post training and 70.65% of the respondents stated that the iTrain Program had enabled them to advance their career



96.74% of the trainees stated that the iTrain Program was in complete alignment with the industry requirements

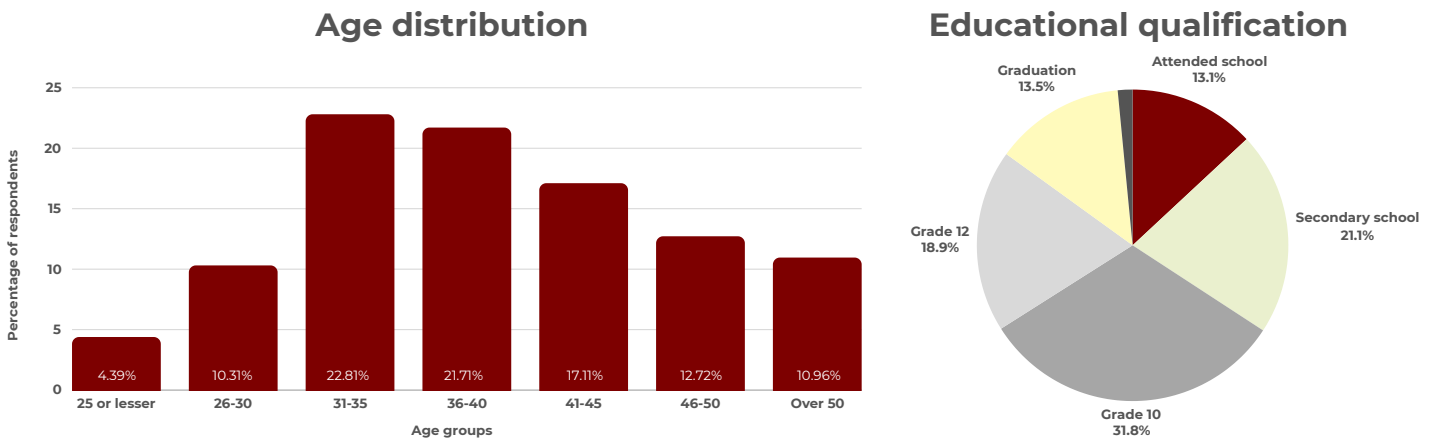


91.52% of the trainees reported an increase in their soft skills such as communications, client management, and time management

A sample of direct beneficiaries (painters and contractors) of the program were surveyed as a part of this study. The interviews were carried out in March 2024 at the fixed and mobile locations (across Delhi, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Kolkata, Durgapur, Kochi, Thrissur, Pune and Meerut) at which they attended iTrain sessions.

The results from these interviews are presented in the following sections.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS



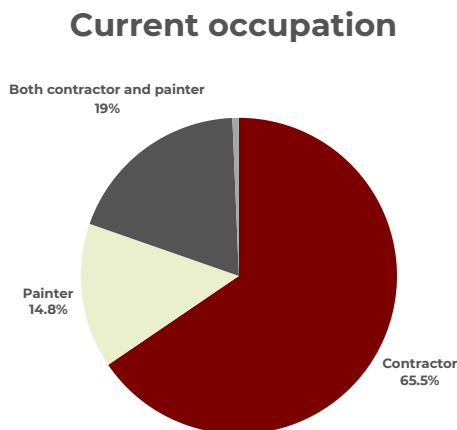
A significant majority (44.52%) of the respondents were male between the ages of 31-40. **31.81 % of the respondents stated their highest educational qualification was completion of Grade 10.**

TRAINING RECEIVED ACROSS THE CENTRES

While 72.71% of respondents received training at the fixed centres, 27.83% utilised the mobile iTrain centres, indicating a varied distribution of training preferences among participants. **Insights from discussions with respondents who utilised the mobile iTrain centres underscored the necessity for specialised and comprehensive training in remote locations targeted by the mobile vans.**

The first generation of painters constituted a significant majority, with 68.29% of respondents belonging to this group. 23.50% reported having 6-10 years of experience in the painting profession while 56.5% of the respondents possess 11-25 years of experience, another 14% had over 26 years of experience.

GROWTH TRAJECTORY OF TRAINEES



Among respondents engaged as contractors, painters or dual roles of both, a significant 65.50% identified themselves as contractors in their current occupation. The distribution of occupation varies across locations showcasing a mix of roles from contractors, painters and both contracting as well as painting.

Among the respondents who are contractors, the size of their team has increased by 12 members on an average since they have joined the iTrain Program.



From Painters to Contractors: The iTrain Transformation

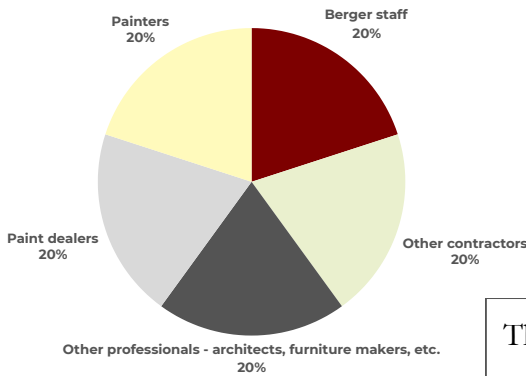
Conversations with the trainees highlighted that many joined the program as painters seeking to enhance their skills. The program not only improved their technical proficiency in paint application, textures, waterproofing, woodworks, and polishing but also provided guidance on professionalism, customer service, and business practices.

This comprehensive training empowered them to transition into independent contractors, attracting clients with their professionalism and quality of work. As their businesses grew, they took on leadership roles, hiring and training other painters. Some now lead teams of 12-15 painters, with a few overseeing teams of up to 50 painters.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Since its inception in 2014, respondents have been engaging with the iTrain Program, 29.35% of the respondents reported joining the iTrain Program in 2023 and benefiting from the professional development.

First contact with iTrain Program



The awareness of the iTrain Program was supported through various sources such as paint dealers, contractors, and other industry professionals. Significantly, 45.32% of respondents reported that the primary source of their awareness about the iTrain Program was through the Berger Paints staff members.

The iTrain Program’s notable visibility through the Berger staff members as the primary source of awareness highlights the effectiveness of the outreach activities.

On the successful completion of the iTrain session, the participants receive a certification validating their skills and competencies in the painting industry. **83.35% of the respondents reported receiving a certificate upon completion of the training.**

Certification highlights the importance of formal recognition in validating participants’ skills and competencies within the painting industry.

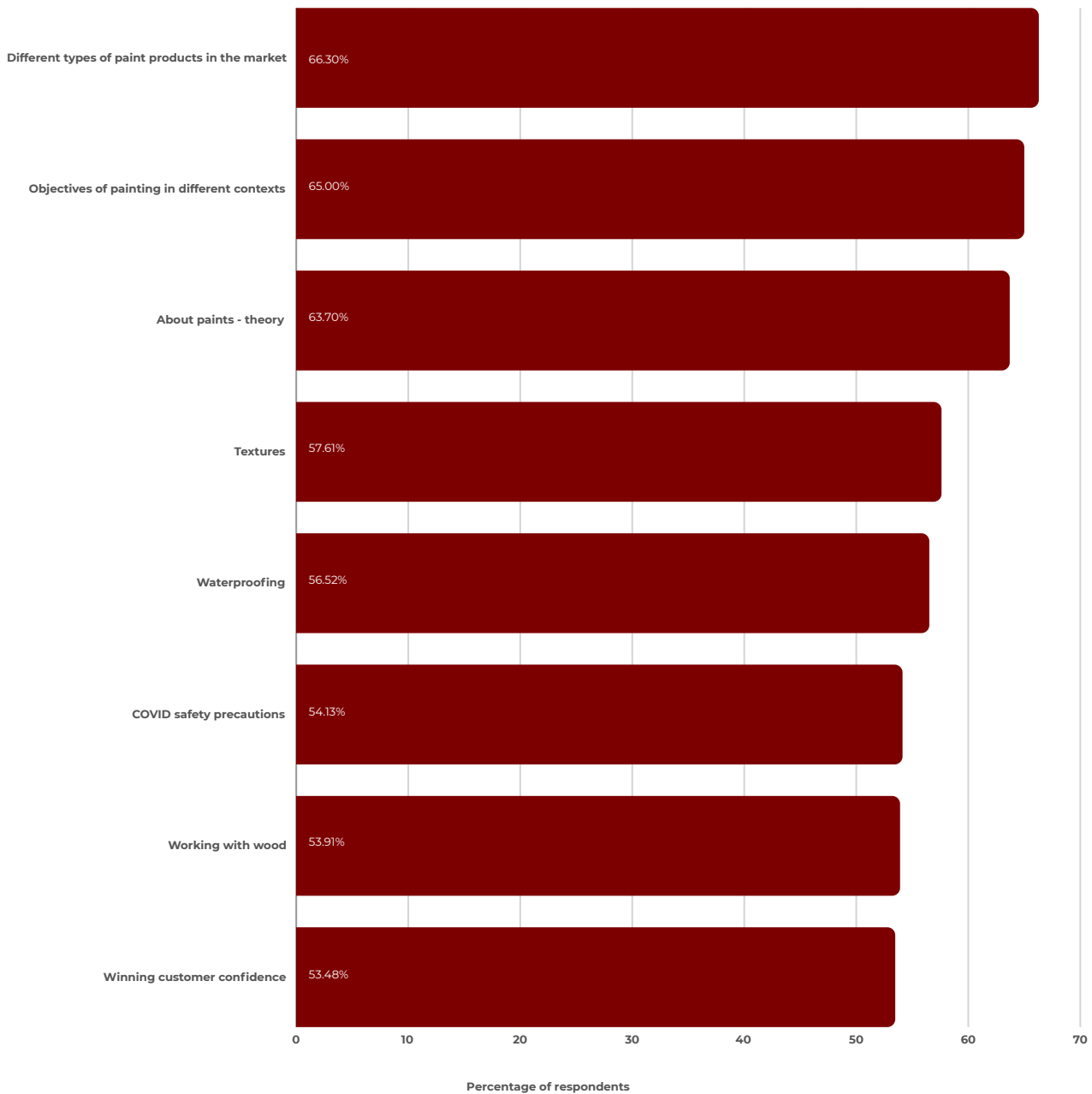


EFFECTIVENESS OF ITRAIN PROGRAM

The training modules of the iTrain Program are meticulously designed to provide comprehensive training to the trainees. **Each of the session topics are conceptualised in alignment with the upskilling needs of the painters, as well as the changing requirements of the painting industry.**

The most predominantly attended sessions are those on the different types of paint products in the market, painting requirements in different contexts and theoretical sessions on various paints and their respective applications.

Sessions most commonly attended



Attendance data across locations highlights high engagement in sessions covering new paints, paint types, and applications. This indicates the sessions' relevance and alignment with trainees' needs.

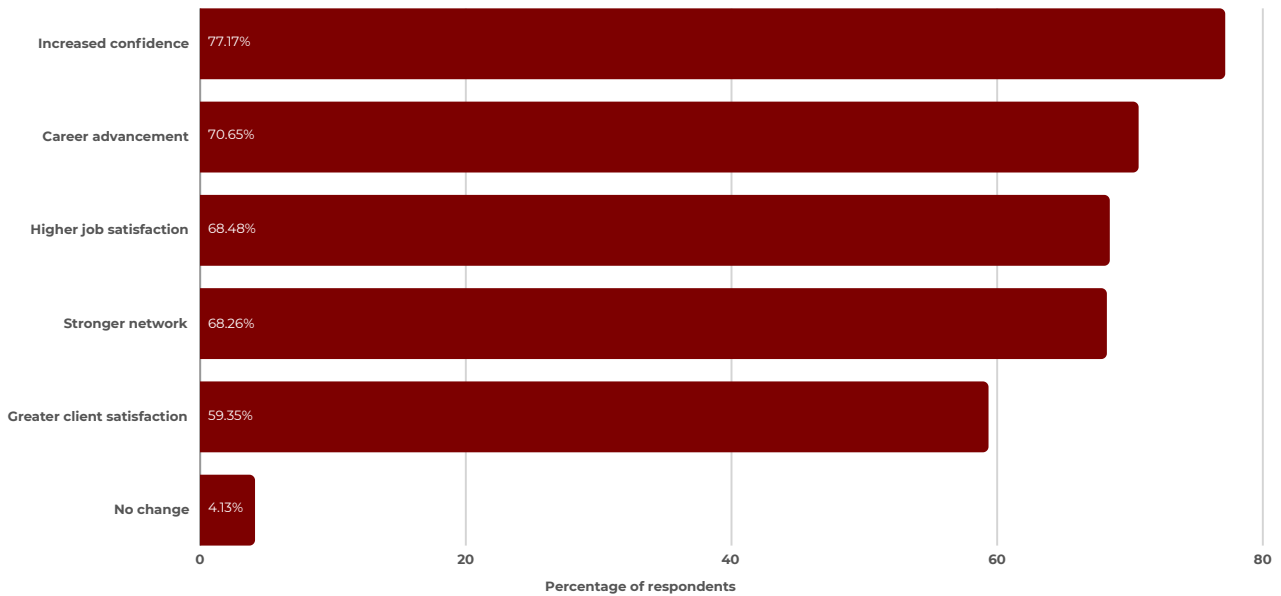


RELEVANCE OF THE SESSION TOPICS

77.17% of the respondents reported increased confidence, indicating the iTrain Program’s success in boosting the trainees’ self-assurance of their skills and abilities. 70.65% of the respondents stated that the iTrain Program had provided them with opportunities to advance their career, highlighting program effectiveness.

Furthermore, the iTrain Program has led to higher job satisfaction (as reported by 68.48% of the respondents) and a stronger professional network (as reported by 68.26% of the respondents) among participants, indicating improved fulfilment at work and valuable networking opportunities for career growth.

Professional development due to iTrain



The iTrain Program has not only enhanced technical skills but also significantly improved painters’ confidence, career prospects, job satisfaction, networking abilities, and client satisfaction, highlighting its holistic impact on their professional development.

57.52% of the respondents expressed complete satisfaction with the session topics and modules covered in the iTrain Program, indicating their high relevance to day-to-day painting tasks. This suggests that the program effectively addressed the practical needs of the painters, enhancing their skills and knowledge in a meaningful way.

Respondents highlighted the exceptional support provided by trainers and the iTrain Program teams, including regular follow-ups, answering queries over calls, and accompanying them for site visits. This support enhanced the training experience and facilitated practical application of the skills learned, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the program.

Additionally, 42.48% of the respondents, especially those interviewed in the North Zone (New Delhi, Meerut, Ghaziabad) expressed the need for greater coverage of topics such as more detailed application of textures, wood work and greater hand-holding in application of new products.

Furthermore, respondents in Pune felt that the session topics were repetitive for certain topics. However, the low attendance in Pune locations suggests that those who attended infrequently may not have found the sessions as useful as regular attendees.

ALIGNMENT OF THE SESSION TOPICS WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PAINTING INDUSTRY

A significant 96.74% of the respondents stated that the technical and non-technical training provided through the iTrain Program was in complete alignment with the knowledge and skills required for the painting domain.

82.70% of the respondents observed a change in their awareness levels pertaining to various aspects of painting and the safety measures to be observed while at work. The most significant increase was observed across the training centres of Kolkata, Thrissur and Durgapur.

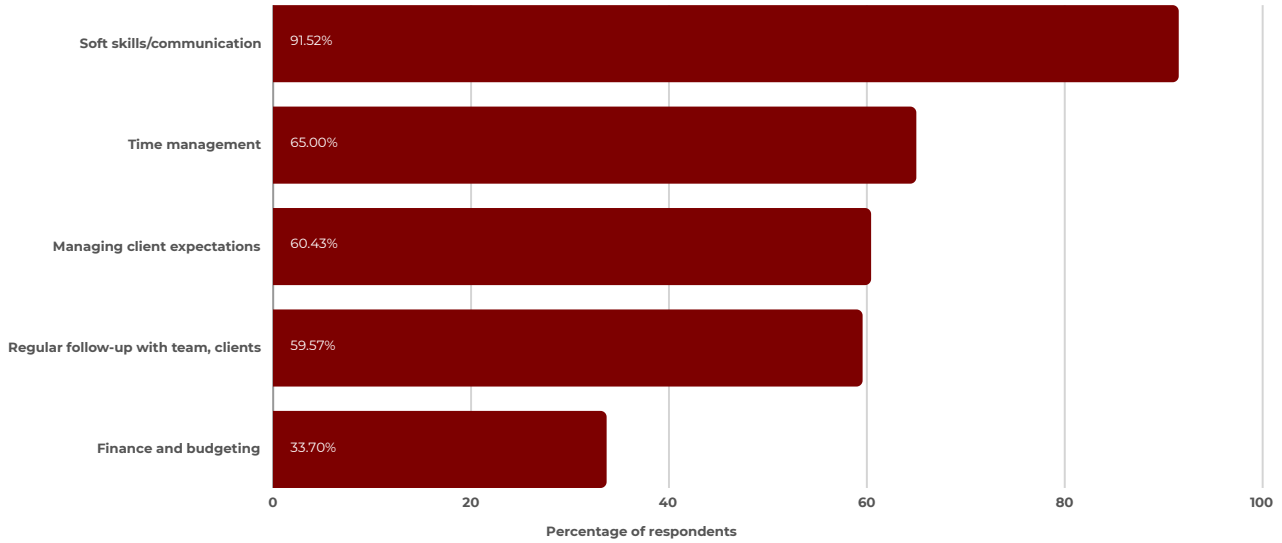
Respondents attending mobile iTrain sessions reported greater increased awareness compared to those attending fixed centres, highlighting the need and relevance of mobile iTrains. Trainees at mobile sessions lack resources for training and exposure to urban markets and changing market requirements. This underscores the importance of mobile iTrain sessions in reaching and supporting painters in remote and resource-constrained areas.

THE ITRAIN PROGRAM'S CONTRIBUTION IN DEVELOPING THE TRAINEES PROFESSIONAL TRAJECTORIES

Post attending the theoretical and practical sessions, all the trainees reported an increase in their technical skills. In addition to the technical training sessions, **91.52% of the respondents reported an increase in their soft skills as well as communications skills. A significant 65% of the respondents reported an improvement in their time management skills, indicating that the iTrain Program has helped them become more efficient and organised in their work.**

Additionally, effective client management is crucial for business success. The program's impact on managing client expectations, reported by 60.43% of the respondents, indicates that painters have learned valuable skills in ensuring client satisfaction.

Non-technical skills development due to iTrain

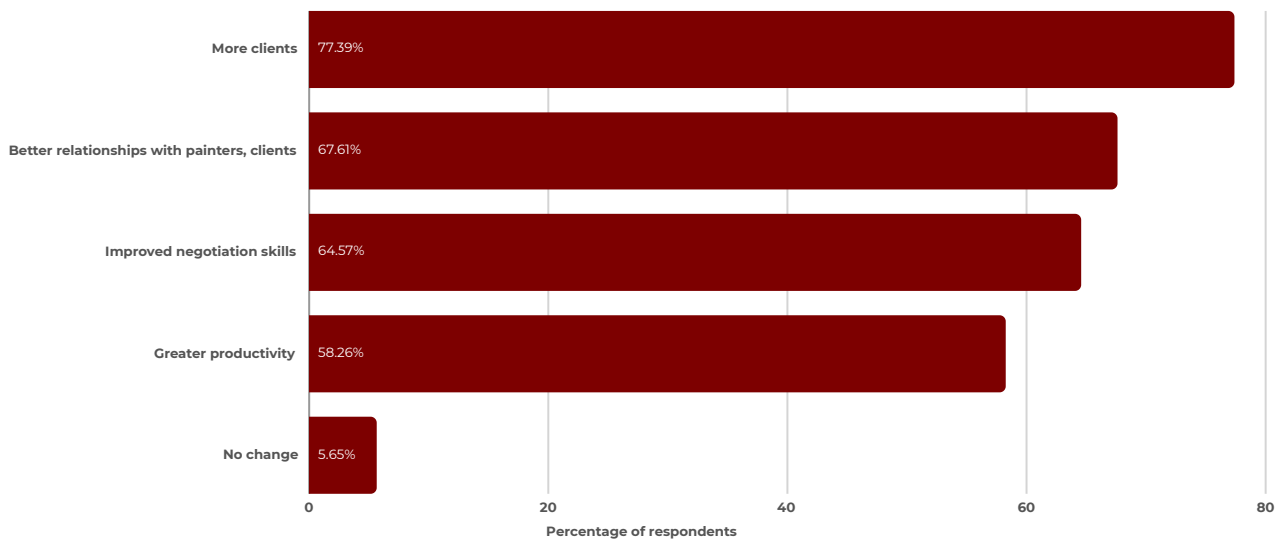


In addition to acquiring technical skills, trainees reported significant improvements in non-technical skills such as soft skills, communication, time management, and managing client expectations.

Furthermore, **the soft skills training has resulted in an increased client base for 77.39% of the trainees**, indicating that the painter’s improved communication and interpersonal skills have enabled them to attract more business opportunities.

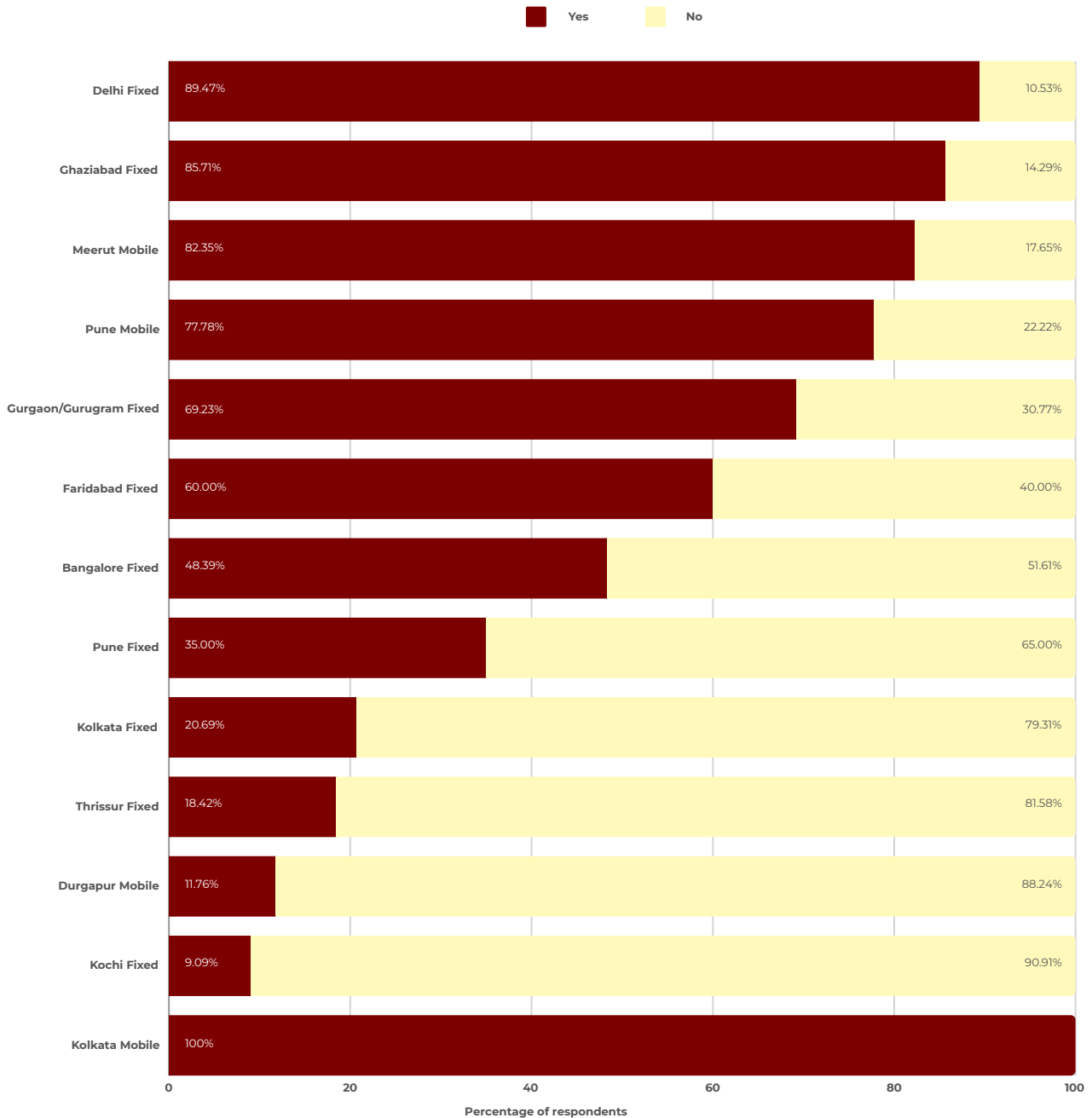
The iTrain Program has enhanced relationships of the trainees with their respective teams of painters, their clientele and dealer base, as reported by 67.71% of the respondents. The respondents also reported an improvement in their negotiation skills and productivity, resulting in more favourable deals for the respondents and increased efficiency in work, respectively.

Effects of soft skills training



The comprehensive approach of the soft skills training component of the iTrain Program has resulted in improved business outcomes and overall professional development for the painters.

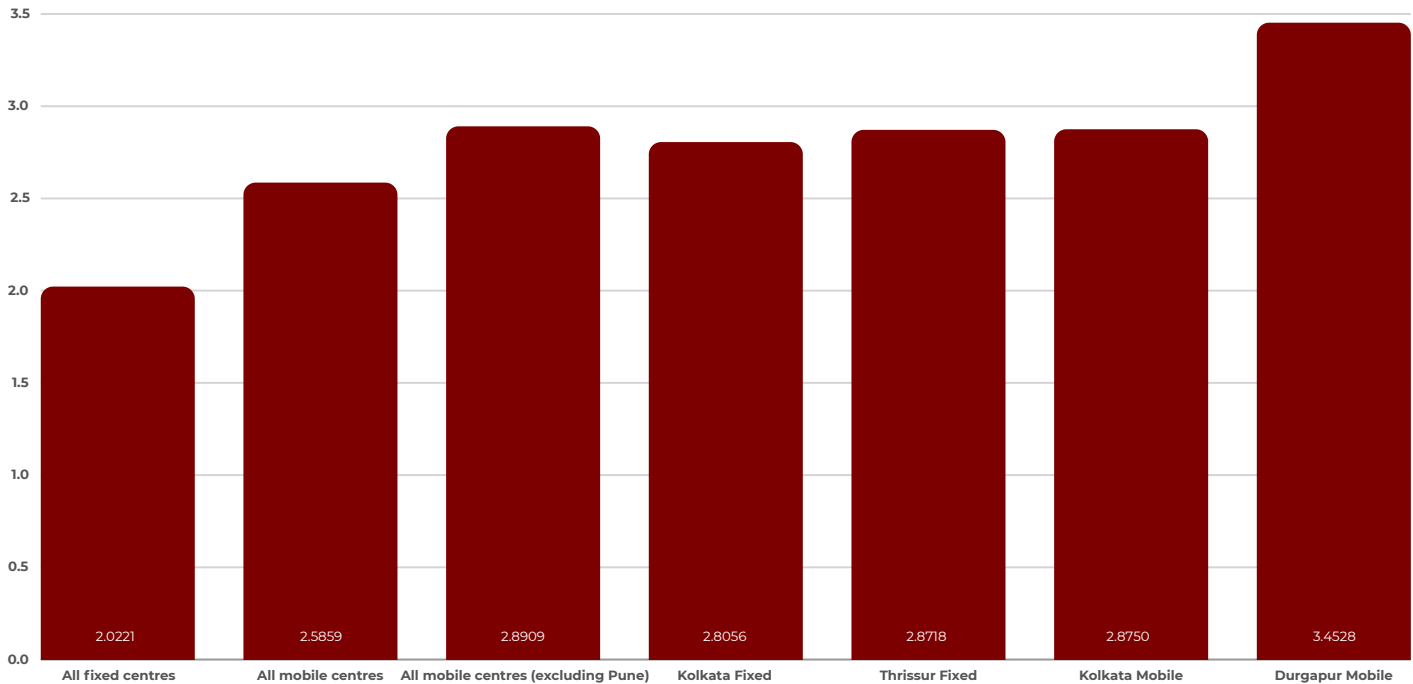
Centre-wise demand for covering extra topics



While there is a high satisfaction with sessions overall, the paint industry continues to evolve, leading to an increasing demand for additional topics such as more detailed work on textures, wood and epoxy. Among the respondents from all the centres, an impressive 89.47% from the Delhi fixed centre expressed an interest in training sessions on new products.

While the satisfaction with the current training sessions is high, there is a strong interest expressed in acquiring additional knowledge and skills to stay competitive in the paint industry.

Average change in level of awareness - select locations



Despite the years of experience, some respondents expressed a sense of redundancy in their skills and knowledge prior to joining the iTrain Program. There has been a significant change in their level of awareness upon joining the iTrain Program. Structured training programs like iTrain can play a crucial role in bridging the gap between outdated skills and current industry standards. New techniques, tools, and best practices empower professionals to enhance their capabilities and stay competitive in the evolving paint industry. **Majority number of respondents from Durgapur mobile centre reported their awareness in various aspects of the industry moving to a 3.45 rating.**

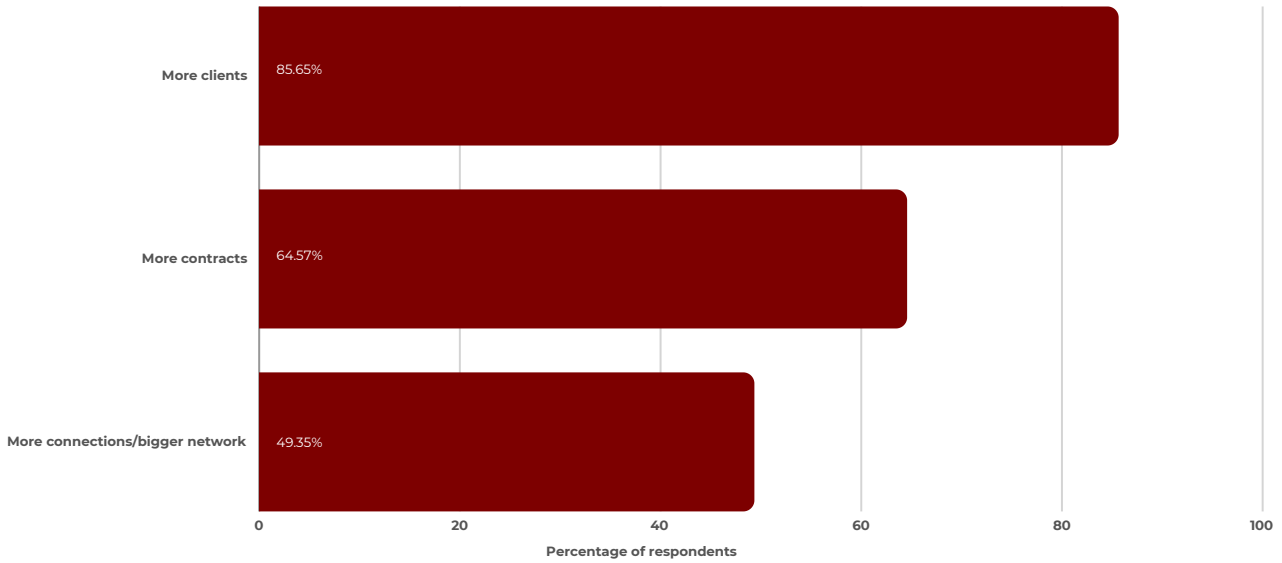
The comprehensive iTrain training sessions are tailored to address specific gaps and effectively empower participants to adapt to the changing demands of the industry.

IMPACT OF THE ITRAIN PROGRAM ON THE TRAINEES' BUSINESS

96.73% of the respondents reported witnessing an increase in their business due to the knowledge and skills set gained through the iTrain Program.

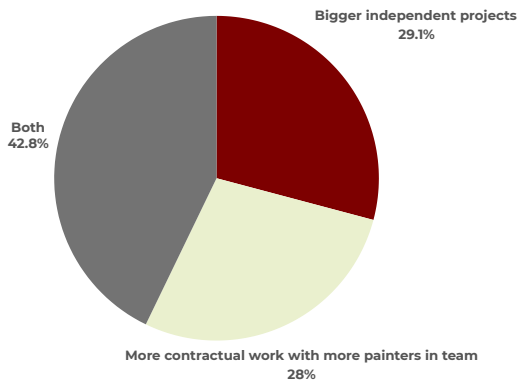
The most prominent aspects of impact were increased clientele and contracts and expansion of professional networks. The iTrain Program has resulted in a significant increase in business opportunities for painters, with 85.65% reporting acquiring more clients, 64.57% securing more contracts, and 49.35% expanding their professional network; indicating that the program has not only enhanced painters' skills but also boosted their business growth and market presence.

Change in business due to iTrain



The iTrain program has led to substantial business growth for painters, including acquiring more clients, securing more contracts, and expanding their professional network.

Aspects of professional growth

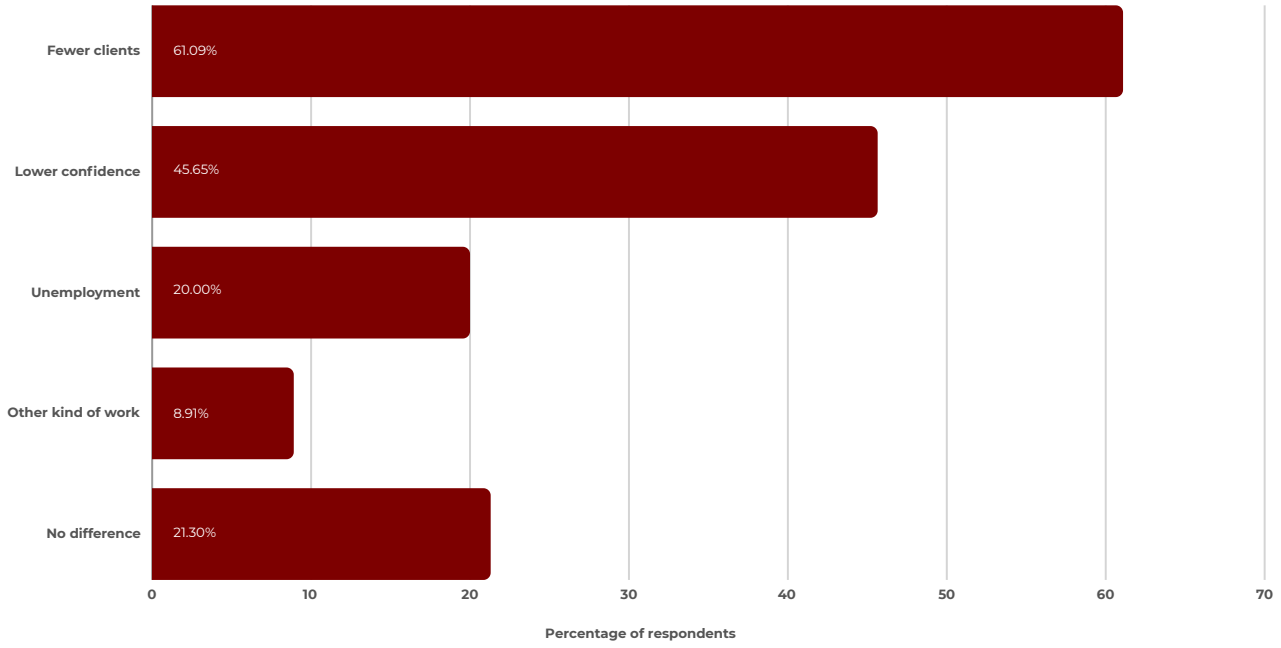


The training sessions have had a comprehensive impact on the painters' careers, enhancing their capabilities and opportunities for advancement. 29.14% of the respondents reported taking on bigger, independent projects; 28.04% of the respondents engaged in more contractual work with larger teams, while 42.83% of the respondents witnessed growth in both the areas.

THE LANDSCAPE WITHOUT THE ITRAIN PROGRAM

A majority of the respondents reported significant losses in the absence of the iTrain Program. **In the absence of the iTrain Program, painters would likely experience reduced client opportunities (61.09%), decreased confidence (45.65%), potential unemployment (20.00%), and a shift to other forms of work (8.91%).**

Alternatives in absence of iTrain



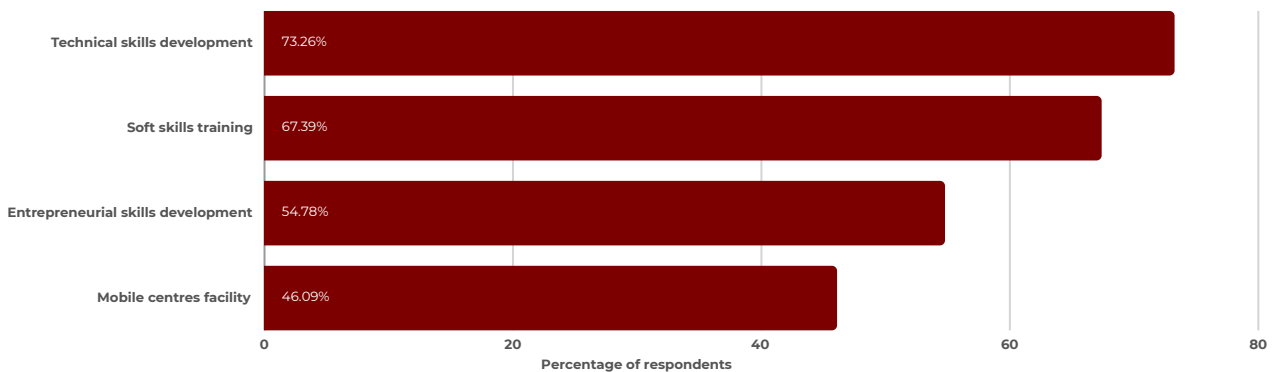
The iTrain Program is pivotal in boosting painters’ professional prospects, preventing potential reductions in client opportunities, confidence, and employment.

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE ITRAIN PROGRAM

The iTrain Program distinguishes itself through its emphasis on technical skills development (73.26%), ensuring painters receive comprehensive training in painting techniques. Additionally, the program prioritises soft skills training (67.39%), recognising the importance of effective communication and interpersonal skills in the industry.

Moreover, the program offers entrepreneurial skills development, as reported by 54.78% of the trainees, preparing painters for business ownership or independent contracting. The availability of mobile centres was highlighted as a unique aspect by 46.09% of the respondents as it further enhances accessibility, particularly for painters in remote areas, showcasing the program’s commitment to inclusivity and reaching underserved communities.

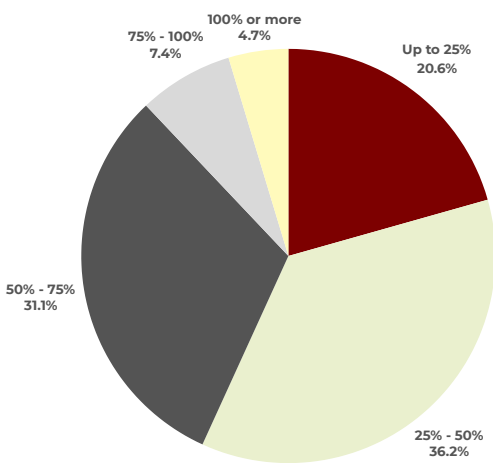
Stand-out factors of iTrain



The iTrain Program’s success lies in its comprehensive approach, combining technical, soft, and entrepreneurial skills training, alongside mobile centre accessibility, ensuring a well-rounded training experience for painters.

The above factors have led to a high recommendation rate of 92.97%, indicating its effectiveness and value to the painters. A majority of the respondents stated that they had referred at least 5 of their network connections to the iTrain Program.

Change in income



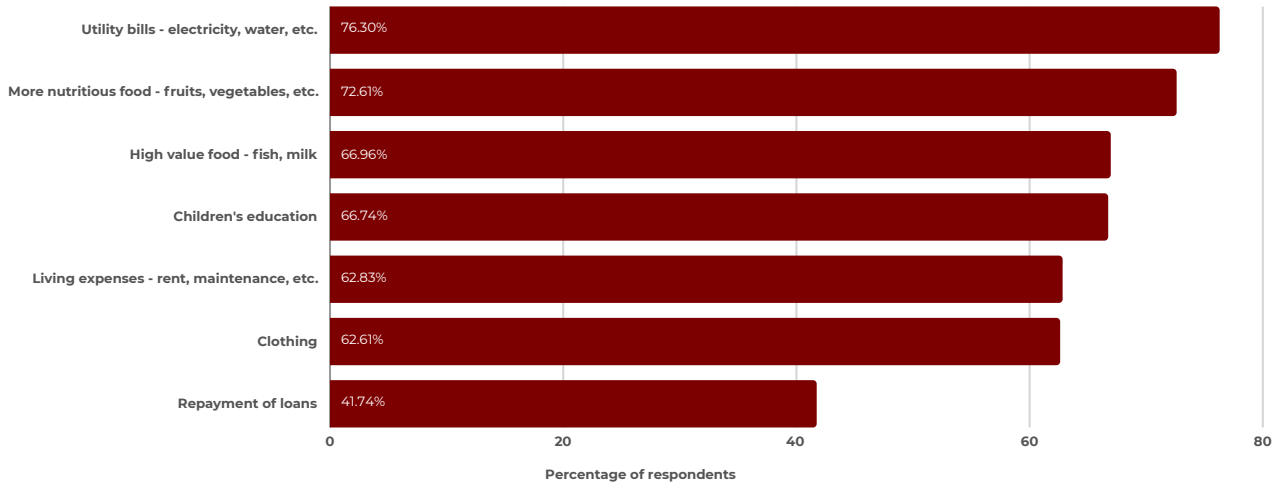
All respondents reported a notable change in their income levels, showcasing the iTrain Program’s positive impact on their financial status. A noteworthy 36.19% of respondents reported an income growth ranging between 25% to 50%, indicating a positive financial impact from the iTrain Program. Additionally, 85.94% of respondents noted significant improvements in livelihood opportunities, highlighting the program’s substantial influence on their financial prospects within the painting industry.

In addition to the monetary impact, the respondents stated receiving benefits through incentives and conversion of leads as well. Some of the incentives received were household items, appliances, funded business trips and bonuses.

Furthermore, all the respondents stated receiving support from either the Berger Paints team or the Berger Express Painting Service in terms of potential business leads and contractual opportunities. In their experience, these leads ensured stability of income, expansion of customer base and opportunities to work on high-budget projects.

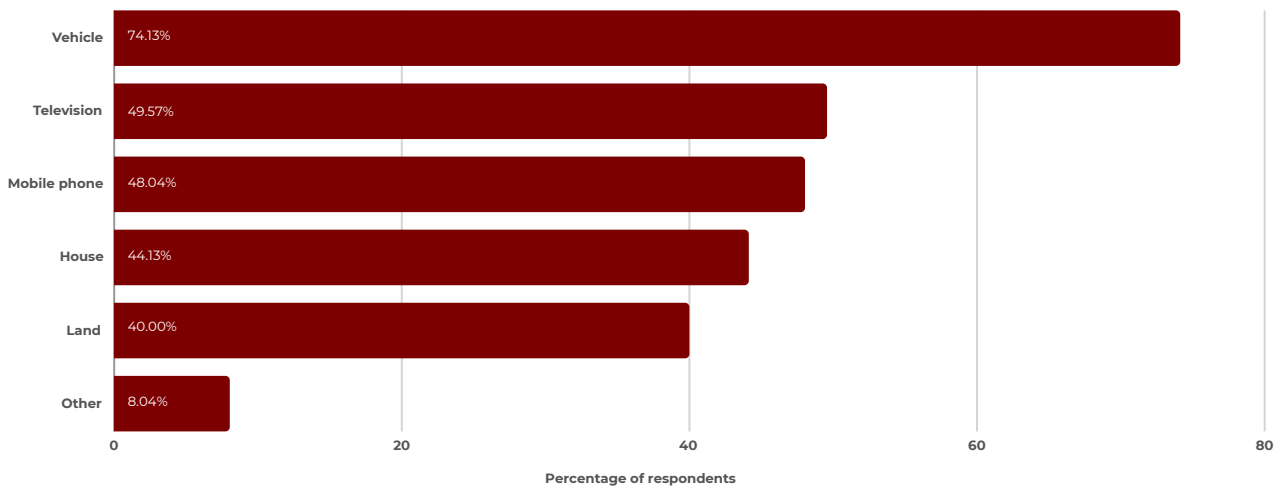
The iTrain program has substantially improved respondents’ financial status within the painting industry, with notable income growth, enhanced livelihood opportunities, and additional benefits like incentives and business leads, highlighting its comprehensive impact.

Areas of increase in expenses with extra income



With the change in the income growth after completion of the iTrain Program, there has been a corresponding increase in multiple expenditure areas. **76.30% of respondents stated a higher expenditure on utility bills like electricity and water reflecting a greater capacity to cover essential expenses.** 72.61% of the respondents stated an increase in spending on nutritious food and vegetables, indicating a prioritisation of health and well-being thus maintaining a comfortable standard of living.

Assets bought using extra income



The increase in income post the participation in the iTrain Program has enabled many respondents to acquire new assets, thus, increasing their financial capability and investment opportunities. A significant 74.13 % of respondents have purchased a vehicle, thus, reflecting their financial stability and an increase in the ability to realise their aspirations.

The iTrain Program has led to a significant increase in respondents' income, enabling them to improve their standard of living, prioritise health and well-being, and expand their financial capabilities.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MOBILE ITRAINS

The collaboration between Berger Paints and Smile Foundation for the iTrain Program's mobile centres has been instrumental in enhancing the program's impact and outreach. Since its inception in 2021, the mobile iTrain component has significantly contributed to improving the skills and market relevance of painters in remote regions across 24 states in India, covering over 100 remote sites.

The mobile iTrain initiative aims to empower painters in remote areas by providing them with market-aligned training, ensuring they stay updated with industry trends, new products, equipment, and services. This addresses a crucial gap in the industry, particularly for painters in tier 2 or tier 3 towns and remote locations, who often lack access to such training and guidance.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OF THE MOBILE ITRAINS

The implementation plan for the mobile iTrain Program, as highlighted by discussions with the Smile Foundation team, demonstrates a robust logistical framework. It includes a comprehensive logistics and travel plan at the macro level, ensuring well-defined training schedules for all operational vans. At the micro level, each van is monitored closely to meet its fuel, travel route, training material, and practice resource requirements. To maintain painter engagement and regular attendance, thorough communication is maintained with the driver and supervisor, and permissions for training locations are obtained in advance.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS

The Smile Foundation team closely monitors key aspects such as attendance, participation, topics covered, and practical sessions to track the program's progress across various locations. Additionally, the travel routes and regions are tracked as well to ensure minimum repetition of routes and to ensure periodic coverage of all routes.

Insights from discussions with the Smile Foundation team highlighted that the teams across locations also track trainees' progress and identify the support required by them, further tailoring the sessions to their requirements.

Interactions with trainees attending the mobile iTrain sessions have revealed the sessions' relevance and coherence with their needs. Additionally, discussions with the Smile Foundation team have highlighted the program's positive impact on underrepresented groups, such as women in regions like Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. **Continued sensitisation and mobilisation efforts by the Smile Foundation have significantly increased women's participation in these areas.** The program has also reached painters from tribal communities in extremely remote locations, such as Gadchiroli, Maharashtra.

Moreover, the mobile iTrain Program has benefited painters with health conditions or family commitments, who are unable to commute to cities for work or training. Through this initiative, these painters have gained access to training and consultation with Berger Paints trainers, enhancing their skills and market relevance.

In conclusion, the collaboration between Berger Paints and Smile Foundation for the mobile iTrain Program has not only improved logistical efficiency but has also contributed to the program's overall management and effectiveness. The value additions highlighted above are indicative of the program's long-term impact and its potential for future scalability and expansion.

STORIES OF CHANGE

“After enrolling in the iTrain Program and collaborating with Berger Paints, I've experienced a remarkable transformation. I've acquired a comprehensive understanding of painting techniques and customer service, enabling me to excel in my projects. My clients are impressed with my professionalism and the quality of my work, leading to a significant increase in repeat business and referrals. As a result, my income has grown substantially, providing me with financial stability and the ability to pursue my aspirations.”

- Contractor, Faridabad Fixed Centre



“Before joining the iTrain Program, my painting business was struggling as work opportunities were limited. However, since joining the program, my knowledge and confidence have increased. I now lead a team of 50+ skilled painters, and our projects range from residential homes to commercial buildings. The training has not only improved my painting skills but also taught me valuable business management techniques.”

- Contractor, Gurgaon Fixed Centre

Social Lens

Commentary

The iTrain Program seeks to enhance the skills of painters in India by providing technical and soft skills training tailored to market needs, aiming to create income opportunities and professional growth. Through certification and skill enhancement, the program aims to formalise the painting industry and empower painters.

The purpose of this assessment was to assess the efficacy and impact of the iTrain Program and its interventions across the period 2023-24. This study intended to understand the changes brought about by the program interventions in terms of changes in the earning potential of program participants, skill development, and livelihood opportunities as well as changes in their soft skills and their contribution to enhancing their standard of living.

RELEVANCE OF THE TRAINING SESSIONS

The iTrain Program stands out for its multifaceted approach to painter training and empowerment. While emphasising technical skills development, it also places a significant emphasis on soft skills training, recognising the importance of effective communication and interpersonal skills in the painting industry. Additionally, the program's focus on entrepreneurial skills development highlights its commitment to not only enhancing painters' technical abilities but also equipping them with the business acumen needed to succeed as independent contractors or business owners.

SUCCESS OF THE MOBILE ITRAINS

Furthermore, the availability of mobile centres demonstrates the program's commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that painters in remote or underserved areas have access to the same high-quality training as those in more urban centres. This approach not only expands the reach of the program but also addresses the specific needs of painters who may face barriers to accessing traditional training facilities. Against this background, the mobile iTrains play a pivotal role in driving participation from women, tribal communities and others.



IMPROVEMENT IN INCOME LEVELS AND STANDARD OF LIVING

Discussions with the painters revealed that the rise in their incomes and profits had led to a marked enhancement in their quality of life. They not only secured basic necessities for their families but also invested in assets like vehicles, land, and housing. Furthermore, they were able to support their children's education and future careers, while also boosting their savings and financial stability.

This increase in income was an outcome of the enhanced business growth and opportunities witnessed due to the enhancement of skill sets of the trainees. The increase in income through their direct business as well as incentives, led them to expand their teams, take on bigger projects and offer a greater variety of services.

Furthermore, a notable enhancement in income and standard of living was witnessed across the contractors, several of whom had joined the iTrain Program as small painters, but were now leading teams of 12+ painters on average.

SKILL ENHANCEMENT POST TRAINING

The study findings demonstrate that the iTrain Program has significantly enhanced the skills of semi-skilled and unskilled painters, achieving a key program objective. Participants and contractors noted a better grasp of mechanised tools and techniques, attributing their shift from traditional to modern painting methods to the program. Most participants recalled gaining awareness about tools such as the sanding machine and moisture meter post enrolment in the iTrain program. The usage of scientific methods of identifying moisture levels and adapting to the right methodology of addressing it, has led to some of the trainees specialising in the same and enhancing their service offerings as well as driving client satisfaction.

Furthermore, post-training, painters apply their newfound skills to their work, resulting in improved finishes and overall quality. This skill upliftment has translated into increased contracts, client satisfaction, referrals, business expansion, and income growth for a majority of participants.

CONSISTENT SUPPORT PROVIDED BY THE ITRAIN TEAM

The iTrain team and trainers are dedicated to supporting painters not only during training but also afterward. They are available to resolve doubts, assist in client management, provide additional training if needed, and even visit painters on-site to offer support. This ongoing support ensures that painters can apply their training effectively in real-world situations, leading to their professional growth and success.

Recommendations

Theme	Challenges faced	Actionable recommendations
Content upgradation	<p>The feedback from Pune underscores the importance of regularly reviewing and updating training content to ensure it remains engaging and valuable, regardless of participants' attendance frequency.</p> <p>Program participants stated that since most of them have been in the painting profession for at least over 5 years, they were of the opinion that some of the session topics were concepts that they were already well-versed with and did not require training on. Furthermore, across locations, respondents stated their interest in learning new, specialised topics, considering the evolving nature of the industry.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on advanced topics and practical applications to enhance the existing skills. • Conduct a comprehensive review of the session topics to eliminate any redundancies and ensure that each session adds unique value to the participants' work. Introduce new and relevant topics that address the evolving needs of the painting industry. • Establish a feedback mechanism where participants can provide input on session topics and content. This will help program organisers continually improve and tailor the program to better meet the needs of the participants.
Hard-copy training modules	<p>In Kolkata, respondents emphasised the importance of having hard copies of training modules for easy access and reference post their training sessions.</p>	<p>To complement the training sessions, it is recommended to prepare hard copy manuals for each session. These manuals can serve as valuable resources for painters to reference and reinforce their learning beyond the training sessions.</p>
Low attendance	<p>Interviews conducted with trainees in the North Zone locations indicated the challenges faced by painters and contractors in attending training sessions during regular working hours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The iTrain Program team could consider implementing a flexible training schedule, such as evening or weekend sessions, to accommodate participants' work hours and make it easier for them to attend without disrupting their regular work commitments. • As part of the program, online or recorded sessions could be made available for participants to access at their convenience.
Building Connections	<p>While the iTrain program strives to empower painters by providing them with leads and contracts through their business development team and the Berger Express Painting service, there is potential to further extend the support offered.</p>	<p>Currently, the painters have access to various apps by Berger Paints Limited such as the Suidha App, Colour App, etc. that allow them to build their online portfolios and showcase it to potential customers.</p> <p>However, this service can be expanded upon to be used as a platform/directory where other professionals in allied services (such as architecture, construction, interior designing, etc.) can access the painters' profiles and collaborate with them on projects.</p>

SAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Painters/trainees

- Are you a first generation painter and/or polisher? Is painting/polishing as a profession practised since many generations in your family?
- How were you made aware of the training under the iTrain Program of Berger Paints?
- Prior to these sessions, how would you rate your understanding of the topics for which you took training?
- In your opinion, is the training aligned to the technical knowledge and skill sets required for the workplace?
- Apart from the technical training, what are the other kinds of training have you received from the iTrain Program?
- Have you been able to contribute to meeting recurring expenses for your home/family since you have started earning? If yes, could you elaborate on which and in what way? [Probe: how frequently do you go shopping/consume fish? Is your child in a better school?]
- In your opinion, what aspect of the iTrain Program stands out? [Probe: What can be highlighted about the program/what has been the most useful]

Trainers

- How did you get affiliated to the iTrain Program?
- In your opinion, what were the challenges/gaps the painter and/or polisher community faced in the absence of the iTrain training? [For mobile van trainers] What was the need to conduct iTrain mobile training in the rural and remote sections of the country?
- In your view, has there been any change in the number of customers/contracts/connections acquired by them on their own after attending the training? If yes, what are the changes?
- Based on your interactions with the painters and/or polishers, what changes have you observed in them after completing the training? If yes, what are they? [Probe: Increased confidence, increased career security, increased livelihood opportunities, increase in family's living conditions, etc.]

Program team

- How do you identify painters that need to receive training for the program?
- How are the mobile centres identified and how are the locations planned in order to conduct the training?
- Were there any challenges that the program team faced in the implementation of the program? If yes, could you elaborate on those?
- How have these challenges been addressed after the association with Smile Foundation? What have been the differences post the association with Smile Foundation in the iTrain Program?

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Verbal consent was obtained from all survey participants for on-field data collection. The participants could withdraw at any point in the study.
- Confidentiality of data is maintained by the researchers.
- Neither unlawful means nor plagiarism were used to present data.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Participants (subjects) in an experiment have a tendency to act in ways that they believe the experimenter or researcher wants them to perform, whether consciously or unconsciously. Further, when a construct being assessed or the behaviours that characterise it are not the same in different cultures, there may be misinterpretation of questions or of responses. These may result in data of poor quality or misleading data in the analysis.
- Ratings of the same items on a scale may differ based on the subjectivity of the surveyor, and on the interpretations of the items based on their phrasing. The ratings may also fail to capture nuances if the items are not carefully constructed to prevent ambiguities.

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