

**iTrain Program - Berger Paints**

**Social Impact Assessment Report, March 2023**

**Report By**

**Social Lens**

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## Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing skill gap in India, leading to a greater emphasis on the need for skill development by the Government of India. The painting sector is particularly affected by a shortage of skilled painters, which can be attributed to the limited availability of training courses. While some painters may learn their craft on the job or through family members, these methods often fail to provide a comprehensive understanding of painting techniques and best practices in the industry. As a result, there is a pressing need for more comprehensive training programs that can help bridge the skills gap in the painting sector and support the growth and development of this important industry.

Berger Paints India Limited has designed the iTrain program taking into account the needs of the painting community. The iTrain program aims to provide training to painters, including technical skills and entrepreneurial abilities, and to support them in building market connections. The iTrain program fulfils a dual objective - it upskills painters who get involved in the training, supporting skill development in the country while also empowering the painters to earn a better standard of living. In addition to the fixed centres, there are mobile centres specifically for the purpose of increasing access to the painters residing in remote locations. The remote trainings are conducted using an iTrain van, equipped with all the tools and material required to deliver comprehensive training sessions remotely. In the financial year 2021-22, Berger Paints partnered with the Smile Foundation to undertake the operational and logistics aspects of the iTrain mobile vans.

This report presents the findings of the impact assessment study which was conducted by interviewing a sample of painters who have received training from both the fixed centres as well as the mobile centres. The locations covered for the assessment were selected from the West, East, North, and South of India to ensure geographical coverage. In addition to speaking with the direct beneficiaries, the assessment included other stakeholders including the trainers, the implementing agency's team and the program team. The objectives of the impact assessment study included understanding the the structure and strategy of program implementation, assessing direct and indirect economic benefits on beneficiaries and community, examining the delivery approach and other factors impacting the achievement of the program's objectives, and evaluating whether the program has successfully enabled the beneficiaries to acquire new skills and enhance existing ones.

The findings from the impact assessment indicate that the sessions had an immense impact on the painting assignments carried out by the trainees, post course-completion. A significant output of the program is that **90.38% of the painters that were interviewed reported receiving a certificate post course completion** through the Suvidha Application. This accreditation helped boost the painters' reputation and helped them attain their client's confidence. The key economic impact of the program on the primary beneficiaries is highlighted by **97.11% of the painters, who have noted improvements in their incomes**, with **51.58% of the respondents also stating that their incomes have at least doubled** since they began attending iTrain sessions. The growth in income is enabling them to enhance their access to utilities, food etc., as well as enhancing investment in assets

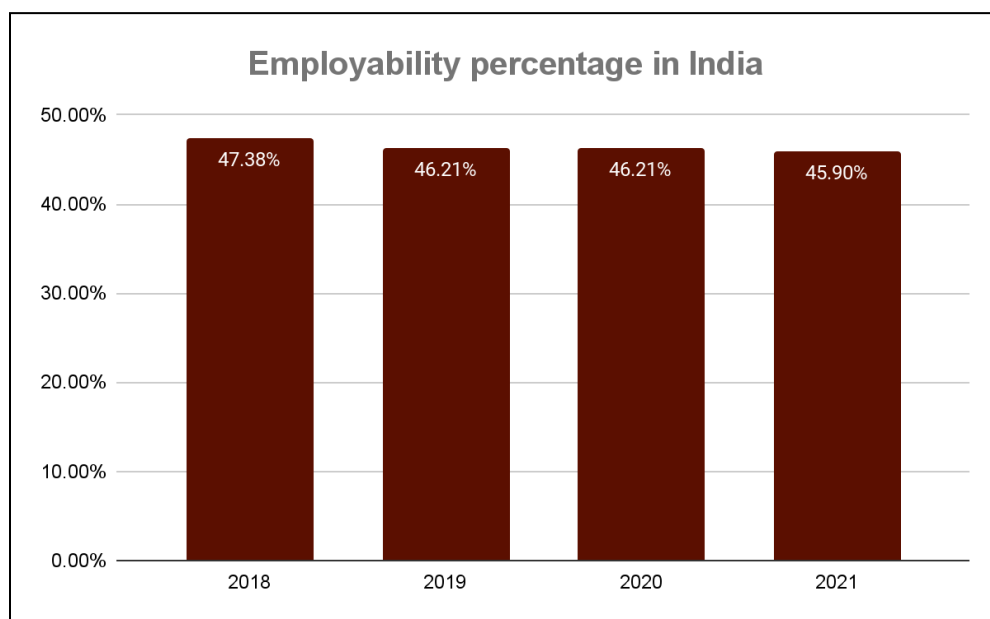
for their families. **95.05% have been able to expand their client base and 80.22% noted that the soft skills sessions and entrepreneurship training are unique aspects of the program** that have been a significant learning for them. This indicates that the program fulfils its objectives of improving professionalism in the industry and making the industry a more viable career alternative for new entrants. Additionally, **efforts at inclusion of women in the program have begun**, indicated by participation of women in the iTrain program in certain locations such as Gujarat and Ghaziabad.

Berger Paints's collaboration with Smile Foundation has demonstrated an increase in efficiency at the operational level. The collaboration has yielded significant improvements, including cost efficiency, transparency and efficiency in monitoring through introduction of a GPS system to track the mobile vans and identification of data points that can benefit the implementation of the program in the long run, and increased stakeholder engagement and efforts at retention and attendance of the painters. These achievements indicate a long-term impact, which can further benefit the painting community at large, streamline implementation and enhance the scalability and sustainability of the program.

## Introduction

### Background and Context

Skill development is essential in addressing pressing global challenges such as poverty, underdevelopment, and unemployment. With globalisation and advancements in technology, the demand for skilled workers has increased, and those without relevant skills face limited employment opportunities, lower wages, and financial insecurity.<sup>1</sup> In a developing country such as India, skill development is given importance and this is illustrated by the Skill India Mission launched in 2015 by the Government of India. The relevance of skilling opportunities is exacerbated further during the pandemic as it has revealed the skill gap in India.



(India Skills Report 2021, Wheelbox)

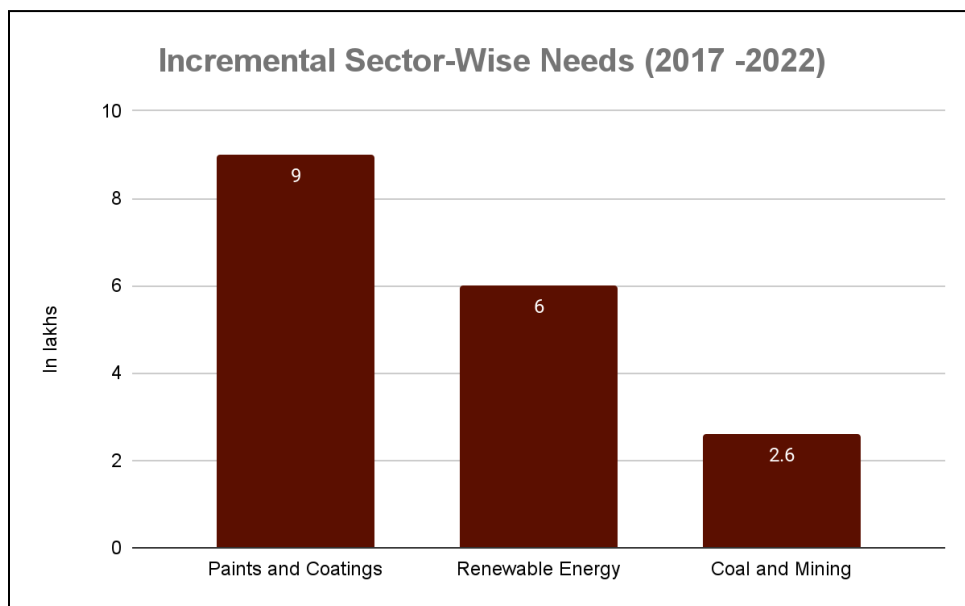
The employability percentage in India has dropped from 46.21% to 45.90% and this is particularly attributed to the pandemic which revealed a significant skill gap among the population. The increase in the skills of an individual in their particular sector has a significant influence on the employability of an individual.<sup>2</sup> In this context, formal skilling opportunities play an important role in the development of a country's economy as well as the development and support of underserved communities. Skill development opportunities support individuals to acquire relevant skills that match the needs of the job market, increasing their employability and potential to earn higher wages.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. (n.d.). Skills Development. Retrieved April 29, 2023, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/skillsdevelopment>

<sup>2</sup> Wheelbox.. India Skill Report 2021. Retrieved from <https://indiaeducationforum.org/pdf/ISR-2021.pdf>

Skill enhancement is a significant driver of the country's economy, and according to the International Labour Organization, India is estimated to have a skill deficit of 29 million by 2030.<sup>3</sup>

The Indian Paints Industry forms a large part of the Indian economy. Over the past few years, it has seen double-digit growth throughout its history. In the medium and long term, the paint and coating industry in the country is expected to continue growing at a healthy pace.<sup>4</sup> The majority of the paint market, accounting for approximately 75%, consists of decorative paints, which includes various categories such as exterior and interior wall paints, wood finishes, enamels, as well as supplementary products like primers and putties. The remaining 25% of the market belongs to industrial paints, which spans across various segments such as automotive, marine, packaging, powder, protective, and other general industrial coatings. In spite of there being such a range of skills required for various kinds of painting, there are limited opportunities for the development of these skills. Resulting in a dearth of skilled labour in this sector which is a consequence of a lack of skilling opportunities for formal training of the painters.<sup>5</sup>



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

<sup>3</sup> International Labour Organization (ILO). (2019). Skills development for youth employment in Africa: A systematic review of the evidence [PDF]. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_742201.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/genericdocument/wcms_742201.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Coatings World. (2022, February 1). Overview of Indian Paint & Coating Industry in 2021. Coatings World India & Asia Pacific Reports. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from [https://www.coatingsworld.com/issues/2022-02-01/view\\_india\\_asia\\_pacific\\_reports/overview-of-indian-paint-coating-industry-in-2021/](https://www.coatingsworld.com/issues/2022-02-01/view_india_asia_pacific_reports/overview-of-indian-paint-coating-industry-in-2021/)

<sup>5</sup> Singh, S., & Kaur, K. (2018). A Study on Skill Development of Paint and Coating Industry. *Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra-Haryana*, 5(2), 2348-1269

The training needs of the painting industry has estimated 6 lakhs as the incremental need of the industry, highlighting a gap between industry requirements and skilled labour. In addition, the Indian Paints Association acknowledges the skill gap existing in the Paint Industry and emphasises on the need to take initiatives that aim to skill painters. The former president of IPA has stated that the demand for skilled painters in India is projected to rise from 1.7 million in 2013-14 to approximately 3 million by 2023-24.<sup>6</sup> This demand for skilled painters in India remains unfulfilled due to inadequate on-ground training and upskilling.

In this context, the iTrain Program is designed by Berger Paints to address the challenges faced by the painter community in a timely fashion. The program, with its comprehensive curriculum is intended to skill painters and provide them with a certification after completion of their training. It aims to bridge the gap between the industry requirements and the community of painters by skilling them with up-to-date advancements in the profession. Training under the iTrain program is imparted through two types of centres – fixed centres and mobile centres. The mobile centres are made to ensure accessibility for painters who are from rural and remote locations, increasing their access to opportunities for skilling and networking.

The iTrain program envisions creating a skilled painting community. Additionally, skill development programs contribute to economic development, as skilled workers are essential for driving productivity and innovation. Thus, the iTrain program aligns with the national objective of reducing unemployment and creating a more skilled and trained workforce, while simultaneously empowering the painters by giving them better employment and skilling opportunities and improving their standard of living.

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<sup>6</sup>Indian Paint Association. (n.d.). Paint & Coating. Retrieved April 30, 2023, from <https://www.ipaindia.org/paint-coating.aspx>

## Program Cardinals

### About the project

The iTrain program was initiated in 2014 with the objective of producing a skilled workforce of next-generation painters who are job-ready. It provides high-quality training in contemporary painting techniques and related services. Berger Paints has established fixed centres in twenty states, which are equipped with modern amenities such as classrooms, video tools, practical training booths, and mechanised equipment. In 2017, Berger Paints introduced mobile training centres to extend the program's outreach to rural and remote areas in twelve states. These mobile centres are customised vans that visit various locations to deliver training. To ensure smooth delivery of training through the mobile vans pan-India, Berger Paints has collaborated with Smile Foundation. The iTrain program also offers support to painters by helping them establish connections and broaden their customer base. By offering such services, the iTrain initiative aims to enhance the quality of life of painters in the country by enhancing their skills and expanding their employment prospects.

### Program at a Glance

<b>Implementation of the Program</b>	Berger Paints India Limited (CSR Initiative)
<b>Details of the Implementing Organisation for Mobile Vans</b>	Name: Smile Foundation Year of establishment: 2002
<b>Duration of the project</b>	2014-Ongoing
<b>Locations of the project</b>	47 centres across 20 states



<b>Objectives of the project</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Imparting quality theoretical and practical training on a variety of products, procedures and techniques used in the painting sector.</li> <li>● Enabling painters to advance their current abilities through upskilling programmes that include soft skill training and entrepreneurial development abilities</li> <li>● Transforming painting from a casual business to a trained professional service, raising the status of painters and elevating their line of work as an aspirational profession</li> </ul>
<b>Program outreach / Number of beneficiaries</b>	1,32,727 participants across all sessions conducted

### **Program Activities**

The iTrain program aims to instil technical skills of painting, water-proofing, and polishing in unskilled and semi-skilled painters. In order to improve the skills set and efficiency of painters, the iTrain program introduces them to various products, painting processes and techniques. Additionally, the program imparts soft skills training to the trainees in order to strengthen their communication and instil key professional skills such as time management, budgeting, professionalism, meeting customer expectations, and customer management.

Through these interventions, Berger Paints aims to enhance the livelihood and income generation potential of painters, expand their customer base while simultaneously ensuring betterment and growth of the painting industry. To achieve this objective, the following activities were undertaken as part of the program.

- Mobilisation of painters:

The mobilisation of unskilled and semi-skilled painters is carried out through four main channels, with word-of-mouth being the primary method. Berger Paints’s network of dealers is another channel; leveraging their familiarity with the local environment and establishing connections with the local painting community to identify painters in need of training. Additionally, contractors and supervisors seeking to enhance their own or their team's competencies can directly enrol in the program. Similarly, architects, interior designers, and other trade professionals seek Berger Paints’s assistance in refining the skill sets of their partner contractors, painters, and sub-painters that they collaborate with. Furthermore, Berger Paints’s loyalty programs also aid in identifying painters and sub-painters who require skill development.

- Course Curriculum and Training Approach

Berger Paints has established fixed training centres to cater to the training needs of painters in urban and semi-urban areas. These centres are dedicated spaces designed to conduct different components of the theoretical and practical training. In addition to the fixed centres, Berger Paints deploys mobile centres to ensure accessibility to painters residing in remote and rural areas. These mobile centres are fully equipped with audio-visual technology, chairs, and necessary tools and accessories for demonstration sessions. All centres, including the fixed and mobile centres, are equipped with mechanised equipment, accessories, and sample materials for theoretical sessions and demonstrations.

The iTrain program's curriculum was curated aligned to the needs of painters, as well as the needs of the painting industry as a whole (which includes stakeholders like supervisors, contractors, consumers, etc.). The topics covered in the curriculum can be divided into four broad categories:

A) Technical aspects of Painting

To address the dearth of a skilled workforce in the paint industry, the iTrain program imparts comprehensive training on the technical aspects of painting, informed by the contemporary requirements of the industry. The course curriculum of the iTrain program covers the basic as well as advanced concepts of painting such as types of paints and coatings, methods of application, identification and examination of surfaces, usage of traditional as well as modern tools and accessories. Knowledge on these concepts is imparted through two methods- theoretical sessions as well as practical sessions. Some of the modules covered in the course are outlined below:

- About paints/ coatings
- Types of paints, coatings and surfaces (interior, exterior, wood, metal, furnitures and fixtures)
- Components of paints and their qualities
- Decorative painting
- Understanding surfaces, damage and their causes
- Introduction to various tools and accessories along with their usage
- Computerised tinting systems

B) Upskilling the painters with additional modules

While the modules covered during theoretical and practical sessions impart technical knowledge pertaining to painting to the trainees, the iTrain program includes several additional concepts in its training curriculum that contribute to enhancing their knowledge and expertise. For example, the trainees are taught to accurately examine surfaces and identify the treatment methodology to be followed, keeping in mind the causes and possible solutions to it in case of damaged surfaces. Furthermore, trainees are taught critical concepts such as colour combination and their nuances

such as analogous colour scheme, complementary colour scheme, neutral colour scheme etc. to help them enhance the outcome of their painting and attain customer satisfaction.

### C) Entrepreneurial Skills

Individuals involved in the painting industry may frequently possess incomplete formal education and may consequently lack essential soft skills. Given that customer interactions form a critical aspect of the painting business, it becomes imperative to provide painters and sub-painters with entrepreneurial skills, including client engagement and effective planning of painting jobs. By imparting training on entrepreneurial skills, sub-painters can now undertake contracts independently, while contractors can enhance their overall knowledge and competency. The modules covered in the entrepreneurial skills training comprise several essential topics, such as winning customer confidence, customer relationship management, calculating painting costs and material requirements, and planning and time management.

### D) Best Practices in the industry

The paintings and coatings industry is constantly evolving, with advances in mechanised tools, types of paints and innovative painting techniques and application methodologies. The iTrain program is designed to stay abreast with these latest trends and impart the best practices being followed in the industry. The iTrain program includes topics like safety standards and waste disposal protocols to encourage adoption of best practices in the industry and instil professionalism in the painters. Additionally, during the pandemic, the painters were sensitised to adhere to COVID-19 appropriate behaviour and follow the required safety and hygiene protocols while at work.

The iTrain program is frequently updated according to the emerging needs of the painters as well as the needs of the industry. Initially, the iTrain program focussed on imparting training on paints, their types, application and tools and techniques. However, with time, additional concepts such as budgeting and costing, customer interaction and satisfaction were included. Additionally, to ensure painters' efficiency and to enhance their income generation prospects, they are introduced to the latest mechanised tools and even provided access to these tools at subsidised prices.

- Collaboration with Smile Foundation

This year, Berger Paints has entered into a collaboration with the Smile Foundation to support the operations of their mobile centres. Smile Foundation is a non-profit organisation that was onboarded based on its expertise in this sector.

#### About Smile Foundation

Smile Foundation was initiated in 2002 to serve the underprivileged by designing education, healthcare, and livelihood programs that are relevant and innovative, particularly for women and children. Smile Foundation aims to use the most effective methodology and technology to achieve

an ideal social return on investment (SROI) and to uphold good governance. The organisation aims to connect the corporate world's competitiveness with social development initiatives.

The partnership with Smile Foundation involves leveraging the respective strengths and resources of both the organisations to ensure that the mobile centres can reach their maximum potential in terms of efficiency and impact. The aim of this collaboration was to ensure process and operational optimization to enhance the program delivery and effectiveness of the mobile centres.

- Conducting the training sessions

Berger Paints conducts training sessions at both fixed and mobile centres, where the program team creates a training calendar each month based on the availability of painters and specific locations. The calendar specifies the dates and topics to be presented. For mobile centres, the calendar determines the places to be visited, the order of visit, and the dates when the van will be available in the area.

The topics for each session are determined by Berger Paints's staff based on requests and considerations from trainers, dealers, contractors, and trade professionals. Each centre has a trainer and a supervisor. The training sessions run for one to two days and include theoretical and practical/demonstration sessions. Attendees can register their cellphone numbers with the trainer or Berger Paints's employees and track their attendance through a one-time password (OTP) system.

- Post-training support offered to the painters

Berger Paints provides ongoing support to painters even after they complete their training, enabling them to access their PCSC-certified participation certificates at any time through the 'Suvidha' application. This accreditation enhances the reputation of painters, instilling consumer confidence. Customers frequently seek painter and contractor referrals from Berger Paints, and the company's employees inform them about the iTrain program's training and direct them to skilled painters. By facilitating such connections, Berger Paints creates opportunities for sub-painters and contractors to network and enhance their employability.

## Going the extra mile

- Maintaining a close connect with the painters post course completion:

Post course completion, the iTrain program trainers and program team is in regular contact with the painters and provides them with guidance, industry-related updates and query resolution. This continued connection with the painters ensures support to them and they are able to seamlessly advance in their career.

- Inclusion of women in the iTrain Program

The painting industry has traditionally been male-dominated, with limited participation from women. However, there is growing recognition of the need to promote greater gender diversity in the painting industry and to provide opportunities for women to acquire new skills and enhance their career prospects. Along these lines, Berger Paints recognises these gaps and the importance of skilling women, and efforts are being made to incorporate women trainees. The initiation of this has begun and it is noted that women have participated in the iTrain program in certain locations.

## Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Berger Paints has an internal monitoring and evaluation framework where the organisation receives regular updates and feedback from the trainers, supervisors, field teams and other staff members. The progress of the on-field activities is monitored through the iTrain application specifically designed for this purpose. Observations from the field are documented through frequent visits to training sites and interactions with the trainees; and if required, course correction steps are undertaken.

Berger Paints has established a robust monitoring and evaluation framework with its implementing partner, Smile Foundation. Smile Foundation is responsible for the logistics and operations of the training imparted through iTrain mobile vans across India and provides timely updates and progress reports on the outputs and outcomes of the training imparted through the mobile vans.

## Methodology

### Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This report presents the results of the evaluation of Berger Paints iTrain program for the period of 2022-2023. 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:

- To determine the contextual background of the project and the extent to which the objectives of the iTrain program were consistent with the program participants’ needs, accounting for the socio-economic challenges faced by the target beneficiaries
- To examine the role of project structure, nature of delivery, etc. in the achievement of the programme goals, outputs and outcomes
- To understand the impact delivered through direct beneficiaries (painters, contractors etc. ) as well as other stakeholders (trainers, program managers, field team members, etc.)

### Stakeholder Mapping

The stakeholders involved in the program are listed below:

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

### Our view of impact

The impact assessment of the iTrain program was undertaken with a primary focus on skill enhancement, instilling entrepreneurial skills, enhancement of livelihood opportunities, improvement in standard of living and the impact on the painting community and industry at large. The detailed view of impact, along with some key outcome and impact indicators is presented below.

#### 1. Generation of Employment Opportunities

- Level of knowledge and skills gained by the beneficiaries.
- Certification of the trainers (as per the Training of Trainers & Assessors by the Paints and Coating Skill Council- Skill India).

- Access to job opportunities as well as access to new markets due to the program.
2. Aiding transition of painters to become entrepreneurs
    - Self-employment opportunities generated (contracts undertaken as an independent contractor)
    - Leading a team of painters
  3. Increase in income levels and overall standard of living
    - Average income before and after receiving training under the iTrain program.
    - Diversification of income sources as a result of the program.
    - Improvement of quality of life with Income enhancement (asset creation / savings etc.)
  4. Behaviour change
    - Knowledge of safe practices at workplace
    - Practice of hygienic and good practices and working in a safe work environment
    - Participation of women (gender equality in the painting industry, increase in opportunities for women)

## Our Approach and Sampling

### Primary and Secondary Research

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach involving the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis has been 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 (World Bank, Periodic Labour Force Survey, Paints and Coatings Industry of India etc.), social enterprises, and independent studies was conducted to establish the project's relevance with respect to the needs of the painting community across India.

A multi-stakeholder approach was adopted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact. Through participatory research, qualitative and quantitative data from painters, contractors, trainers, implementing agency staff, and the project management team was collected and analysed. 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<sup>7</sup>. 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	372
Trainers	9
Business Development team, Implementing Agency, Program Team	2

The research was carried out through language compatible assessment tools deployed by trained field researchers. The field team was recruited and trained to conduct data collection with respect to expected outcomes, prepared for contingencies, and trained to follow best practices for data collection and ethical standards.

Data Analysis

The data was cleaned and checked for outliers, abnormal data entries or missing data using spreadsheet software. Qualitative and quantitative data were separated. A descriptive analysis was

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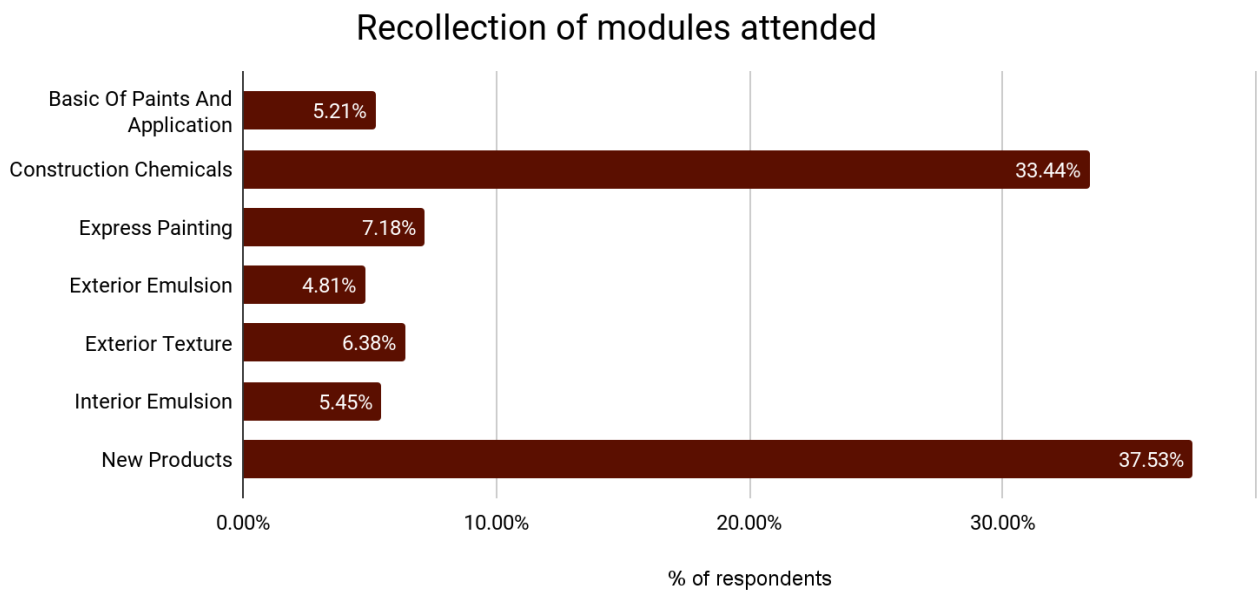
<sup>7</sup> In the multi-stage cluster sampling approach, the population is divided into groups or ‘clusters’ and individual units are then randomly selected from within the cluster to be used under the sample.



conducted across primary and secondary information and correlations between identified variables was carried out as appropriate. An inductive approach was used to analyse qualitative data by looking for relationships between the variables across individuals' characteristics.

## Program Outputs

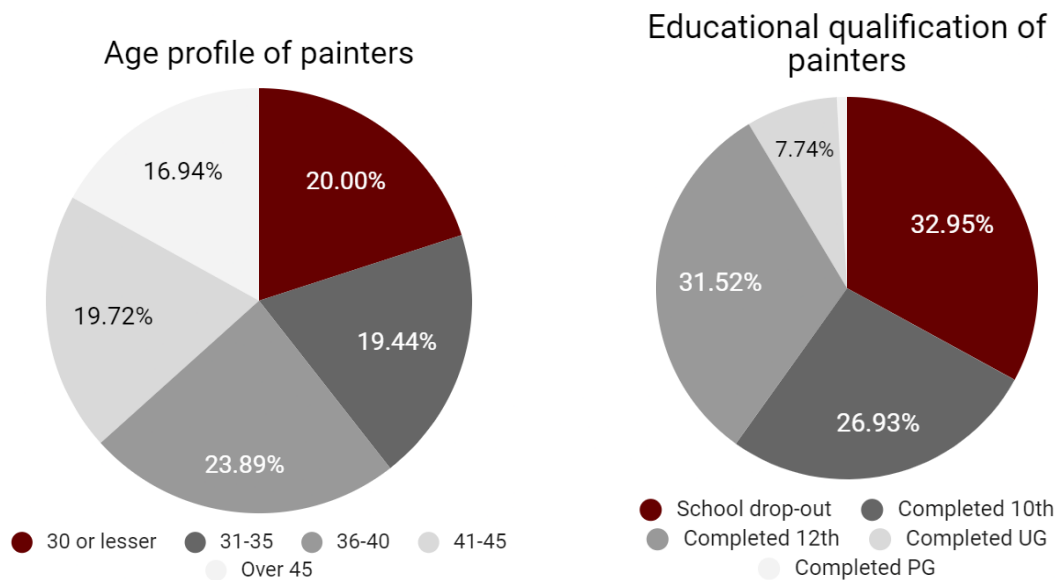
47 centres were operational across 20 states during the year, with 20 mobile centres and 27 fixed centres. The total number of participants in the training sessions was 1,32,727 across all locations. In addition to other training, the majority of participants attended seminars on construction chemicals, and new products.



## Results: Outcomes and Impact

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 2023 at the fixed and mobile locations (across Delhi, Ghaziabad, Kolkata, Durgapur, Ahmedabad, Pune, Calicut and Kochi) in which they attended iTrain sessions. The results from these interviews are presented in the following sections.

### A) Demographic Profile of Respondents

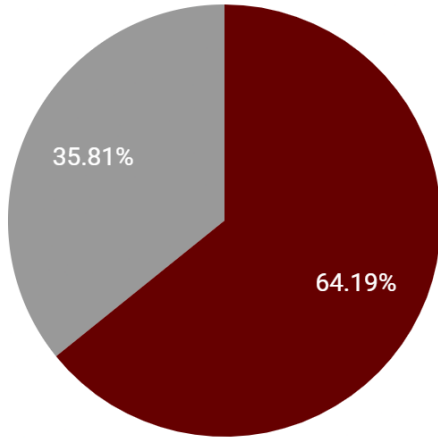


A significant majority of the respondents was male and between the ages 31 and 45. **The highest educational qualification of 59.89% of the participants was completion of Grade 10.**

### B) Need for training the respondents

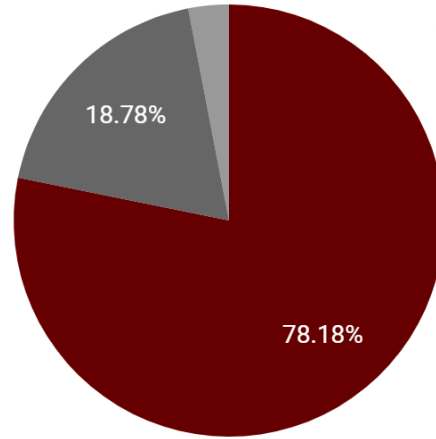
**64.19%** of the respondents stated that they are the first in their family to enter the painting business. **A total of 78.18% of the respondents run their own painting business, seeking clients independently.** Further, trainers and field staff interviewed for the survey remarked that the painting industry has undergone several paradigm shifts in over the last few decades, and particularly in recent years. **The change in technologies as well as growing client demands with regards to professionalism suggests that the participants of the program stand to benefit a lot from a training program.**

Background of painters



- First generation painter
- Inter-generational painter

Employment status

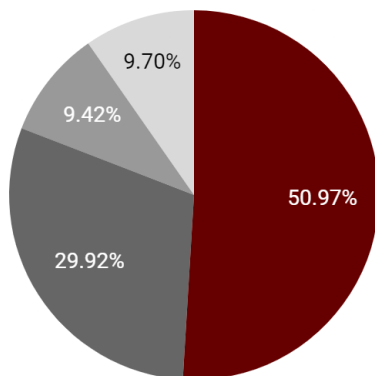


- Business owner
- Working for a contract painter
- Unemployed

### C) Program Delivery

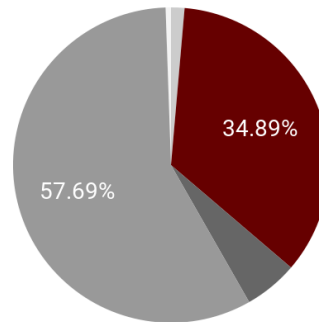
Amongst the trainees interviewed, 82.42% had attended most of their sessions at fixed centres. **57.69% stated they had heard of the iTrain program from the dealers with whom they interact frequently, while 34.89% of them had heard of it directly from Berger staff at events.** Over half of the participants reported that they had attended between 1 and 5 sessions over the last few years.

Number of iTrain sessions attended (overall)



- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16+

Initial point of contact for iTrain program



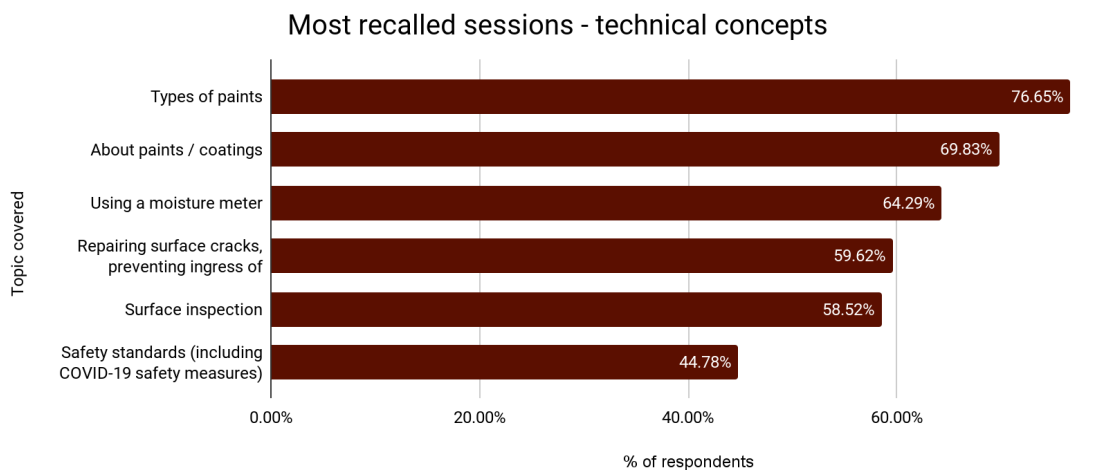
- Trade professionals
- Contractors
- Dealers
- Painters trained under the iTrain program
- Berger staff

The sessions attended by the respondents were both theoretical and practical in nature. **All respondents stated that they had attended sessions on technical aspects of painting, with most frequently recalled topics covered including usage of equipment such as moisture meters, technicalities on different kinds of paints for various types of surfaces, and those around safety precautions and preparation for painting. All respondents noted a greater level of comfort in using the equipment they were exposed to through the sessions, and now use these themselves while simultaneously training their sub-contracted painters in this respect as well.**

I am a contractor and I have attended at least 7 to 8 iTrain sessions, ranging across various topics such as textures, wood coating , enamelling, mixing of colours and the scientific approach to painting processes such as sanding and water-proofing. In addition to this, through the sessions and through interactions with the trainers I have learnt client management and customer satisfaction, which have helped me grow my business. I now lead a team of 10 painters and receive painting contracts throughout the year.

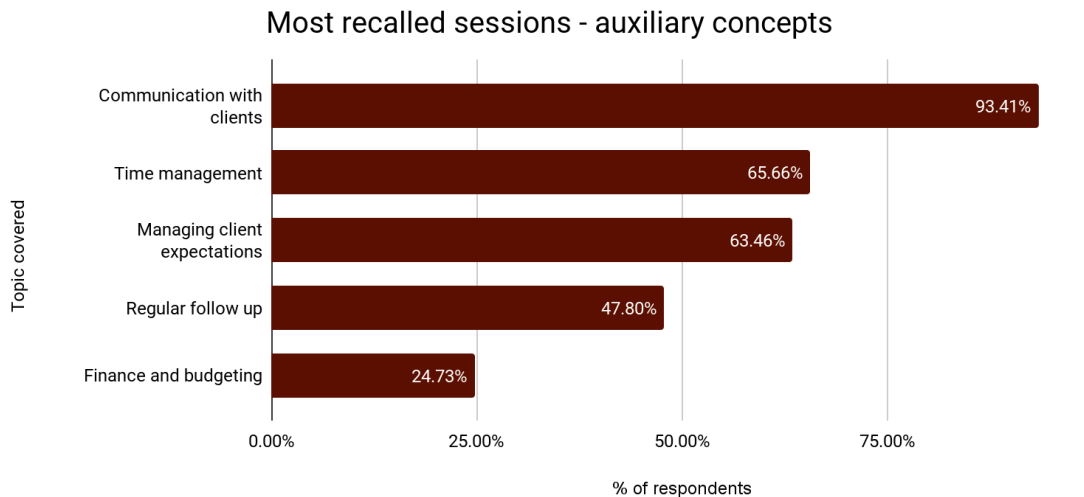
- Painter, Delhi Fixed Centre

While those who frequently attended sessions at mobile centres were largely unable to reach fixed centres, the participants both from mobile and fixed centres expressed satisfaction with the quality of technical training provided.



**In addition to these technical sessions, training was carried out in auxiliary areas, with a view of enhancing the professionalism of trainees and developing their abilities to carry out**

**their work in a holistic manner.** To that end, some of the topics the trainees were taught included aspects of communication, time management, client expectations management, and budgeting.



#### **D) Increase in income and enhancement of livelihood opportunities**

**80.22% of respondents believed that these soft skills sessions and entrepreneurship training are what make the program stand out to them.** They are of the opinion that the greater levels of professionalism, instilled in them through the training sessions, have resulted in tangible business outcomes – **97.11% of the trainees have seen improvements in their incomes**, with 51.58% of the group also saying their incomes have at least doubled since they began attending iTrain sessions. A further 22.62% of the trainees have seen an increase of at least fifty percent in their incomes. **52.02% of the participants said they have been able to secure more and bigger contracts as a result of the training, while 95.05% have been able to expand their client base as well.**

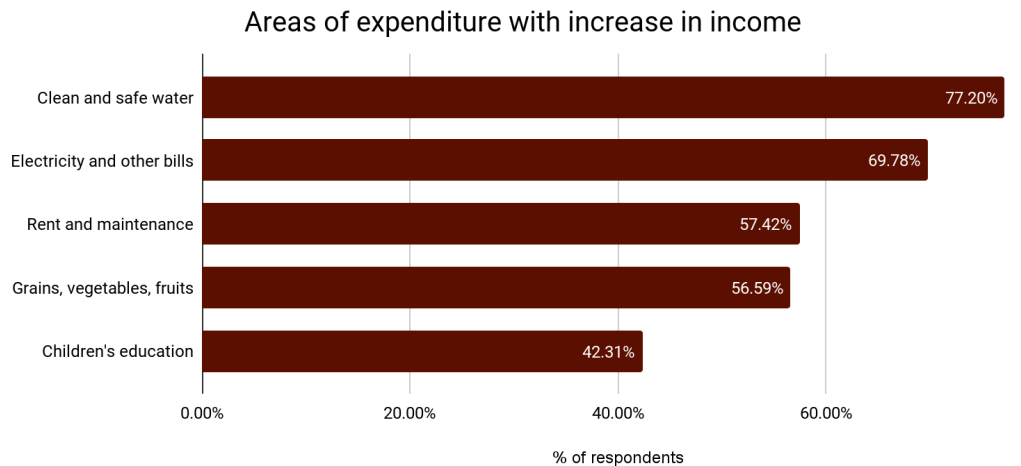
Since I enrolled in the iTrain program and got associated with Berger Paints, I have gained immense knowledge and expertise. I know processes from the beginning until the end and I strive to deliver perfection in all my painting contracts. My clients are satisfied and onboard me for repeated projects- some as big as painting of hotels and resorts. Prior to enrolling in the iTrain program, I knew nothing, but now my income has grown by over 50%.

- Painter, Ghaziabad Fixed Centre

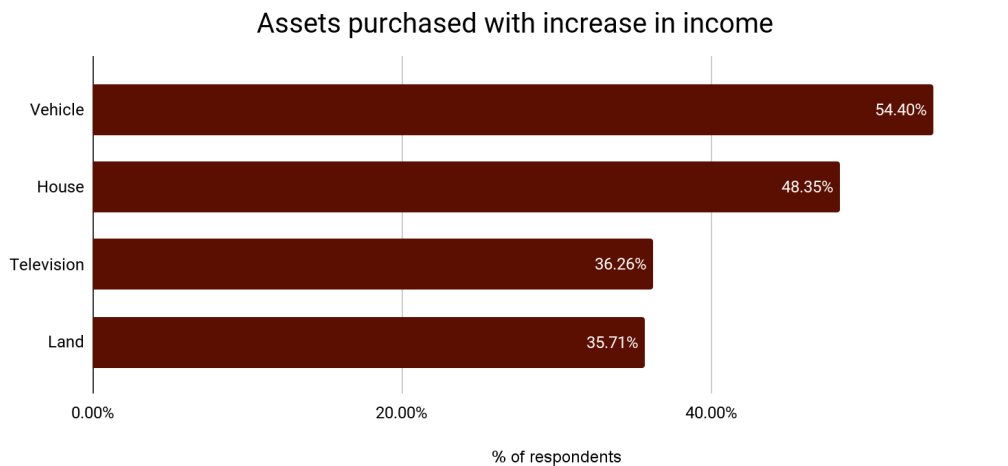
#### **E) Enhancement of standard of living**

The additional income thus earned has been deployed in different ways by the respondents. For a majority of the group, it has been used in meeting expenses towards payment of bills such for

utilities such as water and electricity, as well as in meeting living expenses. 77.2% of the respondents reported directing their incomes towards access to clean, safe drinking water, while 69.78% reported directing their incomes towards the payment of electricity and other bills. **42.31% of the trainees also used it in meeting expenses towards their children’s education.**



**Investments in assets also saw a sharp increase after the increase in incomes were realised. 54.40% of trainees have bought themselves additional cars and bikes, enabling greater ease of commute. Investment in real estate also picked up, with 35.71% purchasing land, and 48.35% buying new houses.**



**All respondents interviewed were very happy to recommend the program to their friends, colleagues, and sub-contracted painters. While some of them suggested that the outcomes could be enhanced by making it more accessible to painters they employ, who are unable to attend as they**

work on a daily wage, **all respondents expressed an overall satisfaction with the program's objectives and activities.**

I have been associated with the iTrain program from its inception here in Kerala. It is a very rewarding experience working with the trainees and seeing their professional growth. It is usually difficult to convince them to join us for our sessions because they usually feel they are doing a good enough job, which we notice in their demeanour when they attend their first session.

However, once they join us, they see that painting technology has changed a lot in recent years and that they have huge scope for improving the service they offer to clients. It is very heartening and a sign of success for us when I see them returning for future sessions and when they come back to us over phone calls or text messages to clarify doubts they have.

- Denzel (Trainer, Kochi Academy)

#### **F) Post-training support**

90.38% of the respondents reported receiving a certificate post course completion through the Suvidha Application. The respondents stated that receiving the certificate had enhanced their credibility and allowed them to showcase their knowledge and expertise to potential clients. Additionally, the painters reported receiving regular update calls and messages from the iTrain team, following up with them and encouraging them to expand their business. The painters also reported receiving support from the iTrain trainers, post course completion. They stated that the trainers were always available to guide them and addressed their challenges over phone as well as in-person whenever required.

Furthermore, the painters reported finding a community through the iTrain program that acted as a wide network to expand their business and also as a source of peer support and guidance.

## **Expansion of the iTrain Program to include women**

Berger Paints has taken a significant step towards promoting gender diversity and inclusion in the traditionally male-dominated field of painting by strengthening their efforts at including women painters in its iTrain program. By undertaking efforts to mobilise women painters for the program, Berger Paints is not only creating a pathway for them to enter the profession but also helping to break down gender barriers in the painting industry. The on-field visit in Gujarat indicated that there is a community of women painters, and 20 women from this community have participated in the iTrain program in Mahapar.

Although the participation of women in the iTrain program is limited, there have been instances where women, particularly architects and interior designers, have enrolled in these courses to enhance their knowledge and skills in areas such as colour combinations and painting furniture and fixtures made of wood or metal. These are small but significant steps that indicate the beginning of diversity in the iTrain program and with it, the painting industry as a whole.

## **Role of Smile Foundation**

The mobile centres of the iTrain program, which are planned, designed and established by Berger Paints, have been operationally managed by the Smile Foundation since the financial year 2021-22. The collaboration between Berger Paints and Smile Foundation has been a success, with the mobile vans achieving their objective of reaching remote locations and imparting training to those who are unable to access fixed centres and there are multiple indicators that highlight the same. As per the conversations with the program team and the beneficiaries, the following value additions to the program have been observed since Berger Paints's partnership with Smile Foundation:

- **Efforts at Retention and Attendance of the Painters**

One of the key outputs of the partnership with Smile Foundation is that there have been no cancellations since on-boarding them for operations. To keep the painters engaged and willing to attend the training sessions on a regular basis, efforts have been made to ensure that there are no session cancellations by maintaining thorough communication with the driver, supervisor and obtaining permissions in advance for the locations decided for the training. Additionally, there are power back-ups in the vans and a copy of the necessary documents such as licence and permission documents, in case required. By ensuring that there are no logistical hindrances, and the continuity of sessions is maintained, the program operationally undertakes additional efforts to improve retention and attendance.

- **Engagement with various Stakeholders of the Program**

Integral to the Smile Foundation's approach, is the consideration of the entire mobile vans' team as important stakeholders. To implement this, the driver and the supervisors of each van are included



in the planning process, in addition to ensuring their social security. HR related documentation of the staff such as PF, Insurance, healthcare are finalised, creating a secure working environment.

To involve the painters beyond just a single training session, provision of meals that are based on the suggestion of the painters of a particular location is another incentive for the painters to attend the sessions. This not only increases their engagement with the program but also aids in retention of painters.

- **Improved Cost Efficiency**

The implementation of a fleet card for direct refuelling of the vehicle has resulted in a significant reduction in expenditure on fuel. In addition, Smile Foundation is responsible for the direct expenses related to maintenance of the vans, RTO requirements, and insurance, which does not have any additional costs and is paid as per actuals.

- **Identification of Innovative Data Points for Program Progress**

The implementation of a centralised dashboard that connects to GPS devices in all vehicles has taken monitoring to the next level by enabling real-time tracking of movement and access to trip data, which can be used to plan routes and analyse fuel efficiency. This has provided data points such as the amount of fuel used and repetition of routes, which can be further used for the planning of the program, incorporating an element of sustainability by reducing the distance travelled without it affecting the number of training sessions.

- **Transparency in Operational Activities**

One of the key principles of the operations of Smile Foundation is process orientation. This ensures that the focus of the operations is to strengthen the process, through the engagement of stakeholders and a non-hierarchical approach. This is implemented through the transparency and streamlined processes maintained by the program team. The salary of the staff employed by the Smile Foundation is paid directly to their bank account, the training sessions are monitored by the supervisors, and the attendance count for each training session is uploaded on an application, ensuring a transparent monitoring process.

The operational assistance of Smile Foundation to manage the mobile centres set up by Berger Paints has not only improved logistical efficiency but is also leading to the creation of improvements in the program design and implementation. The above-mentioned value additions are long term impact indicators that have improved management and efficiency of the program and will assist in the scaling of the program for the future.

## **Social Lens Commentary**

### **Conclusion**

The iTrain Program aims to impart valuable technical and soft skills in painting, aligned to the market-requirements, to the painter community across India. The program strives to provide income opportunities and meaningful employment to painters through skill enhancement, instilling professionalism and assisting them in networking, in order to empower them and help them thrive in their career. Through these objectives, the program also aims to transform the painting industry's landscape in India through recognised certification, leading to formalisation of the painting workforce.

The purpose of this assessment was to assess the efficacy and impact of the iTrain Program and its interventions across the period 2022-2023. 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.

### **Alignment of the program to the community's needs**

It was observed that to a large extent, the program meets its objectives of addressing the changing skill requirements of the painting sector. Interactions with the painters, trainers and the program team highlighted that through the comprehensive training program, iTrain imparts quality training in painting and allied services, bridging the skill gap among painters in India and ensuring that they are up-to-date with the latest trends and techniques being adopted in the sector. Furthermore, the soft skill component of the program instils confidence, effective communication, time management, cost management and efficiency among the painters, allowing them to provide services that ensure client satisfaction.

### **Operations of the Mobile Centres**

It was gathered from the interviews with the program team and staff that Smile Foundation has been instrumental in bringing about operational efficiency in the partnership with Berger Paints. By taking on the responsibility of managing various operational activities, such as van maintenance, RTO requirements, insurance, and direct expenditures; Smile Foundation has helped Berger Paints to streamline its processes and focus on improving the program delivery of the mobile iTrain program.

## **Gender Lens**

Berger Paints recognises the gap in the painting community with respect to the low participation of women. While the participation of women in the program remains limited, there have been cases where women in professions such as architecture and interior design have enrolled in iTrain courses to enhance their knowledge and skills. The on-going discussions and recognition of the gender gap in the painting community is just the beginning of the efforts by Berger Paints to promote gender diversity and inclusivity. It is a significant step towards identifying the challenges and developing solutions to encourage more women to participate in the traditionally male-dominated profession and encouraging gender diversity in the painting industry.

## **Skill enhancement and increase in livelihood opportunities**

The findings from the study indicate that the iTrain program has been able to substantially improve the skills of semi-skilled and unskilled painters, achieving one of the primary goals of the program. Post their enrolment in the iTrain program, the painters and contractors reported greater understanding of mechanised tools and techniques and stated that the iTrain program had enabled their transition from traditional, outdated techniques of painting to modern, efficient techniques.

Post course completion, the painters apply the concepts and techniques that they have learnt, to each of their painting tasks, leading to greater finishing and improved quality of work. This skill enhancement has led to an increase in the number of painting contracts and projects obtained, client satisfaction and repeated referrals, expansion of business and increase in income for a majority of the respondents.

## **Improvement in standard of living**

Interactions with the painters highlighted how their increase in incomes and profits had translated to an improvement in their standard of living. The painters had not only contributed to ensuring their families' access to basic necessities, but also gone on to purchase assets such as vehicles, land and housing. Additionally, the painters reported being able to financially support their children's education and careers and increase their savings and financial security for the future.

## **Way Forward and Recommendations**

1. Longitudinal tracking of a sample of the iTrain program participants is recommended to enable measurement of the long-term behaviour change inculcated through the program. Long-term tracking of the alumni well beyond the program would allow for deeper understanding of change in behaviours, employment and income trajectory, and their choices pertaining to life and career.

2. The painting industry is largely looked at as a male-dominated industry, with limited participation of women. Through the iTrain programme, Berger Paints hopes to continue to inspire and encourage women to develop their skills and increase their participation in the painting industry. Berger Paints must continue its contextualised initiatives to address the barriers faced by women in entering the painting industry and mobilising them. Greater efforts should be undertaken to incentivise women's participation and enhance their role in the industry.
3. The mobile centres could incorporate sustainable elements into the operations of the program, which can further enhance its impact while also reducing its environmental footprint. For example, the data points gathered by Smile Foundation with respect to distances, fuel usage and time taken, could assist in reduction of the carbon footprint of the vans by reducing repetitive travel routes and long distances.
4. The current program has the potential to be expanded to encompass other related professions, such as construction and develop skilling opportunities for the community at large. Since many of these professions are inter-linked, with overlapping interests, scope of work and the need for collaboration at various stages; by incorporating construction-related professions into the program, it would be possible to address a wider range of challenges faced by these communities. Additionally, this would enhance the skill sets of the program participants and enable them to expand their area of expertise as well.

## Annexures

Location-wise training details for 2022-2023 (as of March 2023)

State	Number of Centres	Location and type of Centres	Number of days training conducted in 2022-2023	Number of participants
Andhra Pradesh	2	Vijayawada (F), Visakhapatnam (M)	364	7022
Assam	2	Guwahati (F), Guwahati (M)	326	4677
Bihar	3	Muzaffarpur (M), Patna (F), Patna (M)	457	6383
Chattisgarh	1	Raipur (M)	119	4023
Delhi	1	Delhi (F)	200	1447
Gujarat	4	Ahmedabad (F), Rajkot (M), Surat (F), Surat (M)	863	17586
Haryana	2	Faridabad (F), Gurgaon (F)	243	1961
Jharkhand	1	Ranchi (M)	159	4087
Karnataka	2	Bangalore (F), Hubli (M)	207	3036
Kerala	7	Calicut (F), Cochin (F), Kannur (M), Kollam (M), Kottayam (F), Thrissur (F), Trivandrum (F)	1499	19168
Maharashtra	3	Mumbai (F), Pune (F), Pune (M)	542	7545
Madhya Pradesh	1	Indore (F)	27	130
Odisha	2	Bhubaneswar (F), Cuttack (M)	395	5587
Punjab	2	Jalandhar (F), Jalandhar (M)	361	5048

State	Number of Centres	Location and type of Centres	Number of days training conducted in 2022-2023	Number of participants
Rajasthan	2	Jaipur (F), Udaipur (M)	372	6934
Tamil Nadu	2	Chennai (F), Tirunelveli (F)	282	3077
Telangana	1	Hyderabad (F)	208	1941
Uttar Pradesh	5	Ghaziabad (F), Ghaziabad (M), Lucknow (F), Lucknow (M), Varanasi (M)	848	18742
Uttarakhand	1	Dehradun (F)	264	2262
West Bengal	3	Kolkata (F), Kolkata (M), Durgapur (M)	537	12089
<b>20 states</b>	<b>47 centres</b>	<b>20 Mobile centres, 27 Fixed centres</b>	<b>8304 days of training</b>	<b>1,32,727 participants</b>

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 'Train program of Berger Paints?
- In what way are you able to apply what you have learned from these training sessions in your practice currently? Could you give an example of what you do differently now as opposed to earlier?

[Probe to understand on the site maintenance / estimation of materials /innovative equipment which is used]

- In your opinion, is the training aligned to the technical knowledge and skill sets required for the workplace?

- In your opinion, has there been any change in the number of clients / contracts / connections after being trained under the iTrain program? Have you received any support in getting new clients?
- 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 and online data collection. The participants could withdraw at any point in the study.
- The beneficiaries were identified and contacted through the implementing partners. The implementing partners were present during the data collection as deemed necessary by them.
- 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.

### About Social Lens

Social Lens was founded in 2016 out of Mumbai as a for-purpose organisation that brings professionals working in close collaboration with philanthropy and grant making institutions to drive transformation for SPOs in India. Social Lens services INR 500+ crores of philanthropy capital working with change makers and grant giving bodies with solutions that touch over a million end participants. With 10 years of experience, we have the expertise to strengthen the Impact Ecosystem, by making value driven changes. It addresses the critical challenges in organisation development or program building. We collaborate and design sustainable solutions to achieve better outcomes for end beneficiaries that encompass education, livelihood, women's empowerment, water, micro-finance, and healthcare initiatives.



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