



HOW THE PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPS SKILLS

GMR VARALAKSHMI FOUNDATION: LIVELIHOOD INITIATIVES THROUGH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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SUMMARY

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SUMMARY	<p>The GMR Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF) is the corporate social responsibility initiative set up in 2003 by GMR Group, an infrastructure company. With land acquisition and other activities affecting communities around company projects, the Group's social responsibility focuses on their education, health and livelihoods.</p>
KEY FEATURES	<p>The differentiating aspect of GMRVF's vocational training programme is its tie-up with relevant industries in the provision of sector-specific skills development. Industry involvement is an integral component throughout the skilling value chain. Collaboration is an effective technique resulting in better placements, quality training and cost sharing, and can be replicated in the current scenario of scarcity of resources for socio-development of marginalized communities.</p>
RESULTS	<p>Since its inception in 2003, GMRVF has trained over 30,000 people in 32 training courses. In recent years the organization has started training approximately 5,000 persons annually. The initiative provides youth with technical training as per the market requirements and opportunity for holistic transformation, leading to a win-win situation for all stakeholders. Almost all of GMRVF's skills training beneficiaries come from deprived social and educational background, with a male to female proportion of 51 to 49 percent of total trainees.</p>



SUMMARY

The GMR Varalakshmi Foundation (GMRVF) is the corporate social responsibility initiative set up by the infrastructure company, GMR Group, in 2003.¹ The objective of the organization is to advance community development and overall quality of life in locations surrounding the GMR Group's areas of operation.² Land acquisition and other activities inherent in the operations of the infrastructure company result in communities being affected by project implementations. GMR's social responsibility is focused on the basic needs of those communities, mainly on education, health and livelihoods.³

Under the livelihoods initiative, skill development was taken up to provide quality training and placement services for underprivileged youth. The main target group for the skilling activity includes youth (between 18 to 30 years of age), covering school and college dropouts, unemployed persons and members of below poverty line (BPL) families, giving priority to females. The organization undertakes trade-specific skill training and entrepreneurship development in a variety of areas such as electrician training, refrigeration and air conditioning, domestic and industrial tailoring, two-wheeler repair, data entry, photography and videography.⁴ The courses are chosen taking into consideration market demand, local requirements and youth aspirations.

The organization is equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and training facilities, constituting the basis for hands-on technical training. It is resourced in a win-win strategy with industry partners, by vibrant community linkages with non-governmental partners, and through certifications by major public and private partners including government agencies. The organization not only provides technical training as per the market requirements, but also provides youth with opportunity for holistic transformation.⁵

An average of 5,000 trainees from poor socio-economic backgrounds, many from areas close to GMR operations, are trained every year. Of these 80 percent are placed in employment or self-employment with monthly incomes ranging from INR 5000 to INR 7000 (\$73 to \$102). Almost all of GMRVF's skills training beneficiaries come from deprived social and educational backgrounds. On the basis of 2013-2014 data, GMRVF achieved a promising gender balance of beneficiaries, with a male-female proportion of 51 to 49 percent of total trainees.⁶

History and development

Started in 1978 by Mr. G.M Rao, GMR Group is today a major player in the infrastructure sector, with world-class projects in India and abroad. The GMR group is headquartered in Bangalore and has been developing projects in high growth areas such as airports, energy, highways and urban infrastructure.

As India's leading infrastructure developer,⁷ the GMR Group is already working with governments in India and abroad and has seen the need for skilled workers at entry levels in all sectors of the economy. The Group understands that in India, providing training to the huge number of unemployed persons would solve the problem of scarcity of trained employees for industry. Further, GMR would like to ensure the well-being and livelihoods of communities where they set up their businesses.

Though initiated as a philanthropic model, GMRVF has grown to become a major player in CSR, promoting livelihoods and empowerment among those at the bottom of the pyramid. With the establishment of the Foundation as a company under §25 of the Company Act, the CSR resources of the Group have been routed through the GMR Varalakshmi Foundation for development interventions.



ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

Organizational setting

The Foundation is headed by a CEO, supported by the Director of the Community Services Wing, under whose purview the corporate social responsibility activity falls and to whom 10 operational 'heads' report. Depending on the scale and scope of each training centre, three to four staff members take care of different parts of the training, and report to the location heads.

GMRVF offers a large menu of over 32 courses through its eight skill development centres in five states (see Annex 1).⁸ The centres provide short-term training in marketable trades, integrating into the curriculum relevant technical skills and life/soft skills including yoga, spoken English, computer orientation, personality development, English language skills, voluntary social services (sramdan) and mock interviews. These skill training programmes facilitate and open up direct linkages to government and industry players to enhance the trainees' scope for upward mobility. This process aims at transforming unskilled, unemployed and dropout youth into technically trained workers with employability skills, confident to take up and remain gainfully employed earning sustainable incomes to meet the basic needs of their families.

From the beginning, partnership with public and private stakeholders was developed to manage the centres and projects. GMRVF is an approved Vocational Training Provider (VTP) under the Skill Development Initiative (SDI) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Further, it is affiliated with several Sector Skill Councils, and collaborates with the National Skill Development Corporation on the STAR Scheme for several industries. Other partners include Andhra Bank Rural Development Trust, Tribal Development Agency, Department of Tribal Welfare, Government of Andhra Pradesh and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in addition to industry partners.

The Foundation undertakes skills development as the main executing agency in association with other partners. Partners who have joined in conducting various courses include Voltas for air conditioning, Schneider for electrical, Ashok Leyland for heavy motor vehicle, Volvo for excavator operator, Hero Honda Dealers' Association for two wheeler mechanism, among others. More industrial partners have joined in course of time, such as Apparel Training and Design Centre (ATDC), Verband Deutscher Maschinen-und Anlagenbau (VDMA), CELEBI and Four Fountains.⁹ These entities are business associates of the GMR Group who have become partners in its skill development interventions.

Skilling value chain

The present case is not explicitly a business model as such since it is not meant to make profits for the promoters; it is a development model promoted through the corporate social responsibility resources of the GMR Group. However, the organization has structured operational procedures, which will be reviewed below. It builds up capabilities in youth, and thereby, in partnership with other stakeholders, contributes to national development goals.

1. Sourcing, mapping and mobilization

The uniqueness of GMRVF's skill development programmes lies in its needs assessment of the market and industry before deciding on any course curriculum. This ensures that any course provided to the trainees is aspirational for the youth and also relevant to local industry.



The needs assessment includes youth aspirations mapping, aptitude of trainees, minimum level of education and age, kind of job advertisements in newspapers, responses from placement agencies, availability of trainers, potential family support and socio-economic background of the trainees. Industry requirements are examined along with the availability of collaborating partners and possible cooperation of other positive stakeholders.

GMRVF undertakes mobilization measures to create awareness regarding its training programmes. Mobilization processes include distribution of brochures and literature, discussions with prospective beneficiaries and community leaders, organization of awareness campaigns (melas), advertising through posters, local cable television and newspapers, outreach through NGOs, employee references and word of mouth. The Foundation also leverages relationships with government bodies, NGOs, and community-based organizations (CBOs) to reach remote and underserved areas and link prospective trainees from the communities to the service. These partners have a vital role to play in the model. Initiative managers reach out to meetings and programmes organized by the NGOs/CBOs; using these platforms, the prospects of vocational training in the centres are shared with the communities, parents and youth. NGOs/CBOs collaborate with the initiatives spending their time and personnel because their target communities benefit from the GMRVF's vocational training programmes.

2. Training standards and content

With more than 32 courses conducted by GMRVF through eight centres, training standards and content are a priority.¹⁰ Private sector partners are involved in several aspects of training, including curriculum design, training of trainers, provision of guest faculty, provision of infrastructure and provision of equipment.

The course curriculum for training programmes is largely determined in consultation with private industry partners, which makes the curriculum very industry-specific and relevant to market needs. Basic modules provided by government training programmes are taken as a base. Then, as per the requirements, industry partners add value to the curriculum, making it more adaptable to the existing market requirements. Feedback is taken from employers and trainees with regard to course curriculum, which is periodically revised on the basis of these suggestions. Feedback from trainees is generally taken during the post-placement interactions and alumni meets.

Training programme duration ranges from two to three months. Training programmes fall under diverse industry sectors: electrical, electronics and allied services, IT and ITES, automotive, apparel and hospitality.¹¹ Technical aspects of the courses include 114 hours of theory and 216 hours of practical training. Life skill components are integrated into the curriculum to ensure holistic development of trainees, including spoken English (30 hours), communication skills, yoga (72 hours), computer skills (30 hours) & personality development sessions (48 hours). Stress management, conflict management, personal efficacy and productivity, customer service delivery, and listening and responding skills are part of the personality development programme.¹² Thus, the initiative emphasizes development of interpersonal skills and other life skills, providing not only technical training but also providing opportunity for holistic transformation to each and every trainee. Constant efforts are made to understand the expectations of students for the course, and modules are updated from time to time based on their feedback and from other stakeholders such as employers and industry partners.¹³



BUSINESS/OPERATIONAL MODEL

To inculcate social responsibility, trainees are encouraged to engage in volunteering activities in the form of 'Sramdan' or provision of voluntary labour for a social cause, blood donation drives and so on. Trainees are also provided orientation regarding gender, HIV/AIDS awareness and other socially pertinent issues.¹⁴ Soft skills are critical in the employability framework, because the prospective trainees are from poor socio-economic background without much external exposure to job skills such as interviewing, leadership opportunities and professional communication.

Table 1: Courses run by GMRVF in eight centres

NO.	COURSES UNDERTAKEN	NO.	COURSES UNDERTAKEN
1	Computer Hardware Networking	16	Cargo Operations
2	Electrical House Wiring	17	Taxi Driving
3	Computer Basics and MS Office	18	Four Wheeler Repair & Maintenance
4	DTP and Screen Printing	19	Security
5	Patient Care Attendant	20	Photography and Videography
6	General Works Supervision	21	TV and VCD Repairs
7	Electronics and Mobile Training	22	Carpentry
8	Sales and Marketing	23	Bicycle Repair
9	Micro Irrigation Technician	24	Hotel Management
10	Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	25	Water Supply System O&M
11	Landscape Assistants	26	Escalator and Elevator Maintenance
12	Repair and Maintenance: Two-wheeler	27	Certificate Course in Beauty Culture
13	Tailoring (Ladies)	28	Electrical Motor Re-winding
14	Tailoring (Gents)	29	Machine Embroidery, Cot Embroidery, Fabric Painting
15	DTH Technician	30	Excavator Operator



3. Training delivery

Before any training is offered, the Foundation validates the suitability of the trainees to the courses offered through an unique pre-training module consisting of three parts:

- Community verification of each prospective trainees to be recruited;
- Entrance examination to check the level of general knowledge, general numerical ability, basic language skills, etc.; and
- Individual and parental counseling to negotiate the match, once they are identified through the written test and other interactions.

This strategy helps the trainees to select trades according to their ability and aptitude.

GMRVF has put in place Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure quality training and oversee all aspects of the training centres. SOPs are applied across all training centres and cover all aspects of the running of the centres and courses. This includes standardized day-wise curriculum, evaluation and assessment formats, trainer handbooks and trainee handbooks, compiled in course-wise dossiers.¹⁵

The trainers hired for facilitating classes on soft skills are either individual freelancers or personnel representing a training organization. In either case, GMRVF provides packaged courses on personality development, communication skills and leadership skills. Yoga masters are also hired in this way. These trainers are paid their honorarium according to the number of sessions handled. These players and internal trainers in soft skills contribute towards engaging and training on several aspects.¹⁶ Master trainers who have a background of training in a particular area are hired by GMRVF on a contractual basis from the nearby communities; after hiring, an induction is conducted at the centres.

Training is largely provided via residential training centres, equipped with amenities including classrooms, labs, workshops and libraries.¹⁷ The training infrastructure is well designed and maintained with state of art machines and equipment, tools, text books, writing boards, models, vehicles, etc. most of which are provided by industry partners. The permanent capital infrastructure, however, is primarily owned by the Foundation.

4. Assessment and certification

GMRVF follows an innovative continuous assessment system for the life skills component called Individual Trainee Development Plan (ITDP). It is a process that quantifies the levels of student progress both emotionally and psychologically. Predetermined parameters include time management, interpersonal relations, communication skills, maturity, leadership skills and personality, which are individually measured for each student. These are the vital soft skills desired by any employer in the new economy jobs. Students possessing these skills have an edge over other prospective candidates in the job market. Thus, these soft skills become the key component for the success of the training programmes. It is mandatory for every student to undergo three ITDP assessments in a course. Being a continuous evaluation, each and every interaction gives an insight into the behaviour patterns of the student, and these observations are quantitatively recorded. Facilitators understand well that ITDP assessment can either make or break their students, so utmost care, sincerity, and honesty is shown while administering the ITDP inventory.¹⁸



BUSINESS/OPERATIONAL MODEL

It helps to keep a close watch on the performance of the trainers and monitor the performance of the trainees.

On completion of the training, trainees receive co-certification from GMRVF and the trade-specific industry partner. Trainees also receive National Council on Vocational Training (NCVT) certificates from the Government of India as applicable. Courses run in affiliation with Sector Skill Councils are offered industry-relevant training certificates.

5. Placement

The short duration and intensive nature of training is meant to help trainees complete the courses as early as possible and begin earning from jobs as soon as the course is completed. Partnership with industrial partners helps in effective placements. Although in most cases the monthly salaries of youth employed through placement cells are found to be very low, that is, between INR 5000 to INR 7000 (\$73 to \$102), the employment experience in a large company like Schneider Electric may be the first step in the upward mobility of the trainees. The first appointment also serves as apprenticeship for trainees to adapt to the work environment.

6. Post-placement

A certificate in technical training with some input in soft skills may not immediately result in secure and gainful employment for trainees, as the level of knowledge and skills acquired depends on the level of their capability and aptitude. Close handholding during and after training is required. The post-training programme starts with a valedictory function to appreciate and motivate the trainees, enhance their confidence and instil in them positive energy to try for better employment. Placement support is effectively provided to all trained candidates through linkages and partnership developed by GMRVF. Follow-up of trainees who have completed a programme provides an update on how many candidates are continuing with the jobs. All candidates are tracked for at least three months after their placements, and usually up to a year. Alumni meetings are conducted annually on 26 January to interact with alumni regarding their current engagements, issues in employment and future plans. GMRVF makes an effort to attend to the issues of its trained youth, maintain contact with employers and trade unions; this also serves to motivate the current candidates.

GMRVF encourages trainees to continue with formal education through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), and provides necessary and effective support in the enrollment process. In order to serve its aims of promoting socioeconomic inclusion, GMRVF facilitates the provision of zero-balance bank accounts for its trainees.

Innovation

The differentiating aspect of GMRVF's vocational training programmes is its tie-up with relevant private sector players in the provision of sector-specific skill development. Industry involvement is an integral part of the skilling value chains at all the training centres, and this engagement is present throughout the stages of the value chain. This collaboration is not only an effective technique in reducing cost but also a sure way to better placements and quality training.



The needs assessment done by GMRVF to match skills to the market and the desires of the individual also provides a benchmark of success to the programme. Trainee confidence and career security benefits from constant handholding of students during the programme using the ITDA and feedback mechanisms as well as after-programme interventions through alumni meetings, linkages with employers and call centres. The heavy focus on personality and soft skills development of each individual makes the programme more desirable to both candidates and employers. The Foundation believes not in mass skilling, but in carefully skilling each individual to make a difference in their life and livelihoods and in their contribution to the economy on a long-term basis.¹⁹

Entrepreneurship

To address the differing needs of rural and urban centres, GMRVF adopts diverse approaches to training programmes – from mobilization to placement. Urban centres are geared more towards wage employment. Rural centres are more focused on self-employment opportunities. Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDP) form an important part of the course curriculum, with two types of modules:

- **General EDP module:** This is spread over six days and deals with different aspects of entrepreneurship. The general EDP module gives students a glimpse into the qualities and competencies of the entrepreneur, opportunity to introspect, trends in the market, and availability of government schemes, etc.²⁰
- **Focused EDP module:** This is spread over 15 days and covers the general module's topics in more detail and incorporating simulation games, group discussions, skits, role plays, and interaction with successful entrepreneurs and government officials. Students are also given hands-on experience by asking them to conduct market surveys, exhibit salesmanship, and prepare business and action plans.²¹ During interactive sessions with the trainees at the rural and urban centres, budding entrepreneurs are identified and focused modules of self-employment are imparted to such candidates.

GMRVF supports self-employment trainees in obtaining bank loans and grants for establishing micro-entrepreneurial ventures. Though the Foundation does not provide financial assistance of its own to its trained youth, it helps the trainees to obtain funds from NGOs or government schemes to set up income generating self-employment ventures.

Women's empowerment

Women's empowerment is one of the key focus areas of the Foundation. Programmes include formation and strengthening of self-help groups (SHGs), providing skill training to group members, supporting them in establishing enterprises, and providing market linkages to the products they manufacture. Currently, the Foundation works with about 300 SHGs with a membership base of more than 3,500 women. The regular savings and repayment pattern of the SHGs has prompted various institutions to extend lending support to these groups, and they have so far attained loans above INR 2 million (\$29,000) and are contributing towards raising livelihood opportunities.²² GMRVF facilitates these SHGs by extending support through motivation, development, training and workshops. It has also delivered skills development and agricultural extension assistance to women SHGs and farmers.²³



INNOVATION

An example of an innovative initiative is Enabling Marketing of Products of Women Entrepreneurs (EMPOWER),²⁴ a project supported by GMRVF to support marketing of products made by woman/artisan groups. EMPOWER provides the crucial link between production of handicrafts and their marketing. It provides backward linkages (e.g. skill building, raw material purchase and printing) and forward linkages (e.g. branding, quality and diversification and marketing). It also provides production support (e.g. infrastructure, machines, seed capital) leveraging GMR Group's support in providing shops at International Airports of Hyderabad and New Delhi, setting up stalls at major conferences and seminars, and also providing manufactured goods to corporate clients including Microsoft, CII, GENPACT, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Deloitte, ISB and Taj Hotels. An online store (www.empowershop.org) has been launched. EBay, Snapdeal and others are used for making direct sales. In its first three years, revenues of EMPOWER enjoyed almost 100 percent year-on-year growth. Revenue now has grown to more than INR 7,500,000 (\$109,000) (see Figure 21). Currently, 70 to 75 women in GMR locations and around 400 other artisans are benefitting from this initiative. On an average each women working full time is earning around INR 5000 to INR 6000 monthly salary (\$73 to \$87.5) per month.²⁵



Source: B-ABLE website



Figure 1: EMPOWER: Growth in revenues (INR in Lakhs)



Source: Presentation on EMPOWER

Financing

GMR Group provides the major funds for the initiative as part of its CSR. Resources are enhanced through partnering with similar industrial partners who provide training equipment and machinery and/or trainers' services, and availing government schemes where possible. GMRVF estimates the training cost per candidate at INR 25,000 to INR 30,000 (\$365 to \$437) for residential training programmes, and between INR 15,000 to INR 20,000 (\$219 to \$292) for non-residential courses. The trainees share a nominal cost of the initiative, around INR 500 (\$7.29) as commitment fee. The Foundation takes care of the costs and expenses of administration, maintenance of physical infrastructure, personnel costs of the remaining permanent and project staff and any other item not met by external contributions.

For perspective, upon inclusion of 10 to 15 percent profit margins (in case training providers were to undertake training in a for-profit business model), GMRVF estimates its three-month residential programme would be priced at INR 30,000 (\$437) per candidate and non-residential training course price would be at INR 20,000 (\$292).²⁶



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships

The centres established by GMRVF have state-of-the-art physical infrastructure in terms of concrete buildings with very spacious class rooms, work rooms, laboratories, open premises for practical sessions, dormitories for residential facilities for trainees, refectories, recreation halls, staff rooms, guest rooms and board rooms. Management aspects of the projects are taken care of by the Foundation, while technical support is provided by the training partners.

The smooth conduct of training is taken care of by each of the centres. Centres are engaged from the beginning with need assessment to the mobilization of the candidates, finalizing training partners, terms of partnership, placement and post-placement support. GMRVF has dedicated management teams including a Director, Location Heads and Training Managers who are responsible to oversee implementation of the programmes at each centre and carry out internal assessments. The project is of manageable size and is easy to monitor from close quarters.

Involving industry partners brings in more trained staff to the management fora. Partnerships with industries are managed by properly-designed memorandums, and the roles and responsibilities are well defined. There has been no major disagreement with any partner to date – any issue is resolved with the partners through open discussions.²⁷

Challenges and solutions

Challenges exist in growth, especially in terms of the number of trainees mobilized for the training. The parent GMR Group has an internal policy to prioritize CSR resources to locations near where it has business interests; at this time, the Foundation does not have current plans to set up centres in other locations. However, most centres now take students irrespective of place of birth. And, since most centres are residential, this has not been a problem.

Though not planning to add more training centres, GMRVF has found a number of ways to increase its impact:

- **Knowledge partnerships:** The Chairman of the GMR Group has been invited to chair the Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation. This has been an opportunity to leverage GMR experiences to influence at a state level. Similarly, the Government of Sikkim requested and an MOU has been signed with GMRVF as a knowledge partner in skilling.
- **Standards:** Even where the Foundation does not have a full-fledged training centre, but has a base of community work, it has started vocational training in hired/rented buildings, using the same SOPs and technical standards and thus increasing the outreach.
- **Grassroots partnership:** GMRVF is proactively seeking out partners from different parts of the country who can a) identify individuals who can benefit from the training, and b) who will sponsor sending youth to GMRVF Centres.



Source: B-ABLE website

Mobilization and retention: The organization provides residential facilities with food and other amenities as a strategy to overcome attrition during the training programme. The state-of-the-art infrastructure of the centres is also used during mobilization to convince potential candidates and for marketability of the courses offered. This has helped to reduce attrition to 10 percent in most of the training programmes.

Another major challenge faced is retention of the trainees after they are placed in jobs. It is challenging to retain trainees during their employment due to factors such as long distance from home and low salary. In order to counter this challenge, mobilization, employment and retention strategies are periodically modified. Under this initiative dealers also mobilize candidates and refer them to the training centres. In certain cases, trainees are provided with accommodation by dealers close to their work; negotiation with the employer for better salary is also conducted, and efforts are made to get two or three people from the same city employed at a same place so that they can hire a room and stay together.

Knowledge and skills: Potential areas of challenge for the effectiveness of the skill training course in mismatch between aptitude, low level of motivation, lack of prior industry exposure, or lack of prior plan for



CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

future employment of the trainees, and the trade chosen. In order to avoid such an eventuality, the initiative has evolved a pre-training module consisting of community mobilization, written test and individual counseling session to negate the mismatch, if any.

In short-term skilling programmes, the trainer is the key, as the one who transacts the skill to the trainees in a limited time frame. Thus the major onus for success of these programmes depends on securing the services of a high-quality trainer, which is not easy to find. There is no pool maintained by the industry or government from which trainers can be hired. GMRVF helps to meet this challenge by accessing trade specific trainers or by offering technical training of trainers. On-site visits and on-the-job training sessions are also arranged by the industry partners for trainees. In order to understand the effectiveness of trainers of the technical and soft skills, in-house master trainers sit in their classes and keep a close watch. Feedback of the trainees for these trainers is also given higher consideration.

Access to financial services: Being part of the CSR arm of the GMR Group, the Foundation runs independently as a core activity of the Group, and is not dependent on funds from other organizations or government. However, since the trainees come from poor financial backgrounds, those trainees who go for self-employment ventures need external financial support by way of loans at low interest and or grants. At present, the Foundation does not provide financial assistance to their trained youth to set up income generating self-employment ventures. However, it helps the trainees to receive funds from NGOs or government schemes.

Results

Individual: Training partners have expressed their satisfaction with the quality of the deliverables. A huge difference has been noted between the skills of the trained trainees and those who are directly hired without any training and must be trained from scratch; in contrast, trained trainees are observed to be delivering performance from day one. The difference is not only in the technical skills of the trainees but also in the overall personality as well, as evident in customer handling, grooming and other critical aspects of job success. Successfully placed students obtain salary packages in the range of INR 6000 to INR 8000 (\$87.50 to \$117) initially in their trade-specific areas, and receive opportunities for career progression as well. For instance, trainees placed with Hero Honda dealers have become Supervisors in company workshops. Similarly, trainees placed with various concessionaries at the airports have grown to higher levels in their company.²⁸

Business: The trade-specific skills and entrepreneurship development programmes undertaken as per industry requirements have led to a win-win situation for all stakeholders. GMR Group and other industrial partners ensure the availability of a trained workforce at lesser costs and without much risk. A partner and Hero Honda Motors Dealer said the approach is working: "The availability of skilled workforce leads to increased productivity and profitability of the business. Our customers are satisfied with the dealings of the trainees and we are satisfied with their enhanced performance at the workplace compared to non-trained colleagues."²⁹



Business benefits from improved relations with local communities and government. NGOs, CBOs and other civil society organizations enjoy enhanced credibility by joining a CSR project with major industrial players and government programmes.

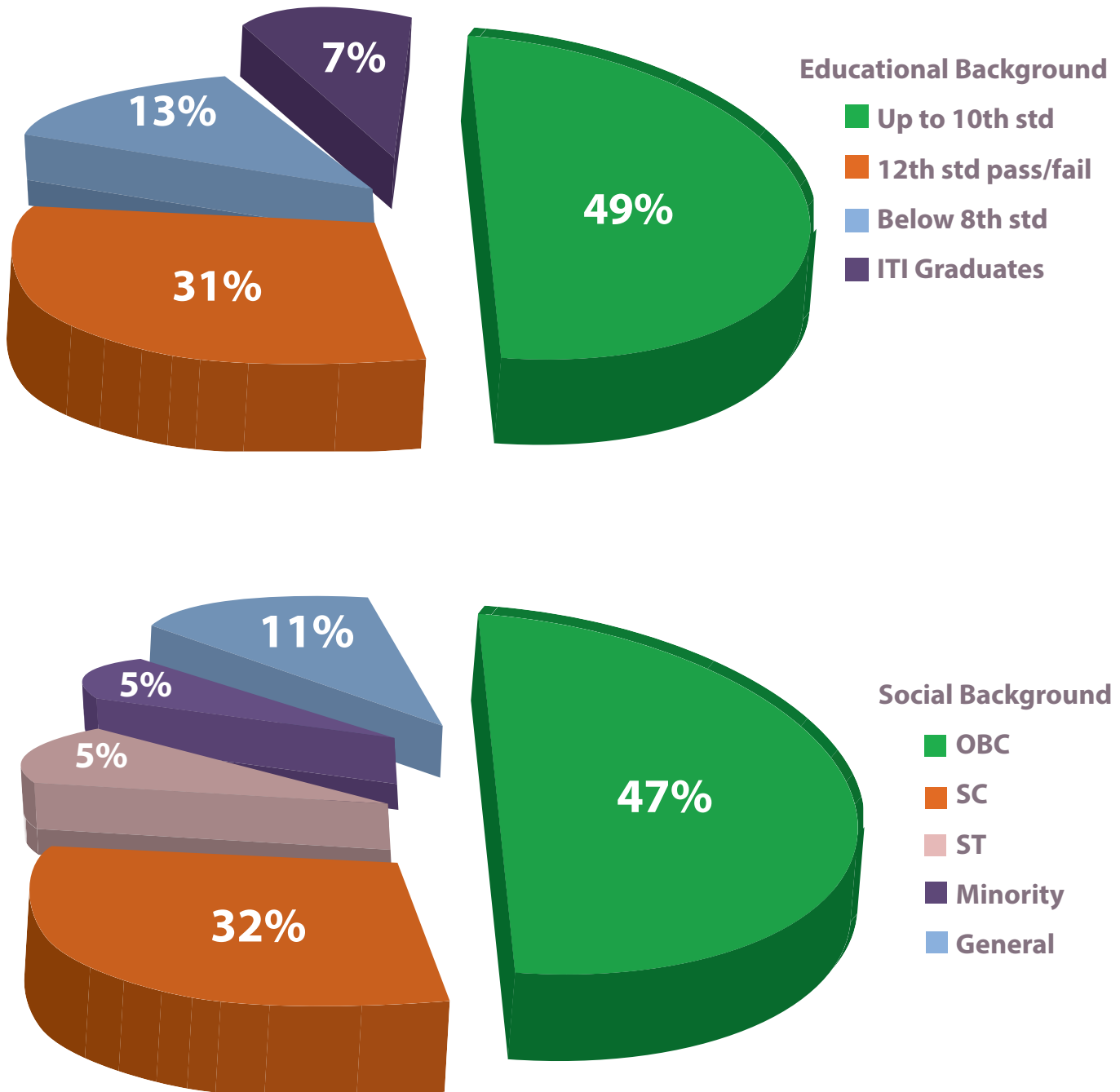
GMRVF has received numerous awards for its vocational training programmes, including the International Orbis Award for Corporate Social Responsibility in Aviation Sector, 2008; TERI Corporate Award for Social Responsibility, 2009; Help Age India Silver Plate Award, 2009; CNBC: TV18 India Business Leader Award, 2010 for Corporate Social Responsibility; Rotary Vocational Award, 2012 for Corporate Social Responsibility; FICCI CSR Award, 2012-13 for GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd.; and, ASSOCHAM CSR Excellence Award, 2013-14 for GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd.³⁰

Economic: The Foundation currently runs eight centres and has no immediate plan to increase this number. This is a limiting factor. Quantitatively, the GMRVF target is to train on an average 500 trainees per year per centre. This objective is achieved almost fully with the available facilities and proper management. However, qualitative achievement seems to differ slightly from centre to centre, batch to batch and from trainees to trainee. Since its inception in 2003, GMRVF has trained over 30,000 people in 32 training courses.³¹ In recent years the organization has started training approximately 5,000 persons annually, exceeding its target.³² The initiative has witnessed a placement rate of over 80 percent.³³ The programmes have also led to a furtherance of self-employment. Urban centres are predominantly geared towards wage employment, and rural ones towards self-employment. Regular income is ensured to the trained employees.

Developmental: Within the policy framework and guidelines of the GMRVF, the initiative has reached out to a maximum number of trainees from the disadvantaged populations, with a focus on neighbouring communities and villages. This is indicated by the number of trainees admitted in the courses. The majority of trained youth belonged to backward classes (47 percent), while Scheduled Caste trainees were 32 percent and Scheduled Tribes were 5 percent with a sizeable percentage (16 percent) belonging to other backward communities and classes. Gender balance is reflected in the selection of trainees with 51 percent males and 49 percent females. Educational status of the trainees reflects that majority (49 percent) were dropouts with a pass in X class or lower classes (10th grade or lower), 31 percent had intermediate education, 13 percent had education level of below 8th standard, while a smaller portion (7 percent) of the trainees had ITI or graduation or similar qualifications.³⁴ The initiative undoubtedly is an inclusive model of service (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Inclusive growth: Promoting livelihoods for educationally, socially and economically underprivileged youth



Source: Presentation on GMR Varalakshmi Foundation: Benchmarking Skill Training



GMRVF has made substantial contributions to sustainable development processes. Individual trainees successfully placed have reported about their improved confidence level, which they attribute to the enhanced quality and quantity of employability skills, widened employment opportunities, elevated income levels, strengthened livelihood security of the families of the trainees and opportunities for self-employment.³⁵

Conclusion

Future opportunities and challenges: As already been stated, there is a vast opportunity for expansion and replication of the model to interior and remote villages and communities, if GMRVF decides to scale up. Even without adding to its eight centres, however, the outcome will be multiplied with more temporary Satellite Centres, greater numbers of youth, more diverse partners and stakeholders and faster expansion. The initiative has a larger scope for inclusion than most modern courses in advanced trades of market preference, in line with the changing economic trends.

The Group understands that the major problem is on the demand side: there are not enough jobs available. Skill training is an input, but there has to be a consumer to receive that input. Thus, more industries are required to set up their plants, and labour intensive industries are required to meet the needs of the available workforce. The GMR Group is developing two multi-product Special Investment Regions (SIR), one is a 4,300 acre SIR at Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu, and the other is a 10,000 acre port-based SIR at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. These hubs of economic activity will create a substantial need for skilled workers.³⁶

Insight: While the network and partnership models of social development projects are more talked about than done, GMRVF is a successful experiment of networking and partnership impacting on the economic and social conditions of marginalized youth. GMRVF has been ensuring at least one industrial or business partner in all major courses to enhance the opportunities and choices of trainees and to share costs. In fact, in all courses, there are multiple partners including the technical partners, soft skills partners and civil society partners. This is a successful and effective model of networking that others can be replicated in the current scenario of scarcity of resources for socio-economic development of marginalized communities.



Annex 1: GMRVF Livelihood Training Centres

NO.	NAME OF THE CENTRE	LOCATION	NAME OF THE PARTNER	FOUNDATION YEAR
1	Nagavalli Institute of Rural Entrepreneurship Development (NIRED)	Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Bank Rural Development Trust	2003
2	Swarna Bharathi Institute of Rural Entrepreneurship Development (SIRED)	Nellore, Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Bank Rural Development Trust, & Swarna Bharati Trust	2003
3	Jarjangi Institute of Rural Entrepreneurship Development (JIRED)	Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh	Independent	2006
4	GMRV Centre for Empowerment and Livelihoods (GMRV-CEL)	Hyderabad, Telangana	Independent	2008
5	GMRV Centre for Empowerment and Livelihoods (GMRV-CEL)	Delhi	Independent	2009
6	GMRV Centre for Empowerment and Livelihoods (GMRV-CEL)	Banglore	Independent	2009
7	Girijana Institute of Rural Entrepreneurship Development (GIRED)	Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh	Integrated Tribal Development Agency	2010
8	CII – Skills Training Centre	Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh	Confederation of Indian Industry	2011

Source: GMR Group website. www.gmrgroup.in/empower-overview.aspx

¹ See www.gmrgroup.in/about-us.aspx to learn more on GMR.

² GMR Group website, Foundation.

³ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation Case Writeshop (26 March 2015).

⁴ GMR Group website, Foundation.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".

⁷ GMR Group website, Hand-shake.

⁸ GMR Group website, Overview.

⁹ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".

¹⁰ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation presentation, "Benchmarking Skill Training"

¹¹ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".

¹² *Ibid.*



- ¹³ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation Case Writeshop (26 March 2015).
- ¹⁵ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, "Vocational training-GMRVF Initiatives".
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7.
- ¹⁷ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".
- ¹⁸ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, "Individual Trainee Development Program".
- ¹⁹ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation Case Writeshop (26 March 2015).
- ²⁰ General EDP Module.
- ²¹ GEDP Training Module.
- ²² GMR Group website, Overview.
- ²³ GMR Group website, Empowerment and Livelihoods.
- ²⁴ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".
- ²⁵ Presentation on EMPOWER.
- ²⁶ GMR Varalakshmi Brief Note on Skill Training.
- ²⁷ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation Case Writeshop (26 March 2015)..
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ Interview with Hero Honda Motors Dealer at Hyderabad during the Case Study Writeshop held at GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, Hyderabad on March 26, 2015.
- ³⁰ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".
- ³¹ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation presentation, "Benchmarking Skill Training".
- ³² GMR Varalakshmi Foundation brochure, "Towards Skilling India".
- ³³ GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, "Vocational training-GMRVF Initiatives".
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4
- ³⁵ Case studies of the trainees provided by the GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.
- ³⁶ GMR Group website, Urban infrastructure.

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