

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

EARLY INTERVENTION AND SKILL BUILDING FOR PERSONS WITH
DISABILITY SARTHAK EDUCATION TRUST

APRIL, 2024

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FOR KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LIMITED



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Ethical Consideration

Informed consent: The interviews were done after the respondents gave their consent. Even after the interviews were completed, their permission was sought to proceed with their responses.

Confidentiality: The information provided by participants has been kept private. At no point were their data or identities disclosed. The research findings have been quoted in a way that does not expose the respondents' identities.

Comfort: The interviews were performed following the respondents' preferences. In addition, the interview time was chosen in consultation with them. At each level, respondents' convenience and comfort were considered.

Right to reject or withdraw: Respondents were guaranteed safety and allowed to refuse to answer questions or withdraw during the study.

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Executive Summary

KMBL's CSR initiatives, **Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs and Skill Building (CwSN) & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)**, in collaboration with Sarthak Educational Trust, focused on vocational training and skill development for disadvantaged communities. Based on the impact assessment study conducted by NuSocia for the period 2021-2022, it was found that:

- **Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN) in Delhi:**
 - Positively impacted 190 children with special needs.
 - Adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic by transitioning to digital platforms, improving child's behavior, learning, and development through virtual sessions.
- **Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in Bhopal, West Delhi, and Gurugram:**
 - Benefited 906 individuals by enhancing employability.
 - Achieved successful beneficiary mobilisation and virtual training, resulting in positive placement outcomes.
 - Provided additional support such as guest lectures, alumni meets, and pre/ post placement support.

Both Early Intervention and Skill Building & Empowerment projects achieved positive outcomes through virtual platforms during COVID-19. Parental involvement was key in Early Intervention, while Skill Building & Empowerment effectively mobilised beneficiaries and provided valuable placement. The report recommends continuing and enhancing these projects to adapt to evolving needs and maximise positive impacts.

1. Introduction

Disability Statistics

The 2011 Census of India reports that 2.68 crore individuals, or 2.21% of the total India's population of 121 crore, are identified as disabled. In Delhi alone, 1.4% of the population (2,34,882 individuals) are disabled, with visual and hearing impairments most prevalent. Bhopal has 84,502 disabled individuals, representing 5.5% of its population, surpassing the national average, and leading in five out of eight disability categories. Gurugram reports 1.8% of its population (23,31,009 individuals) as disabled, with higher numbers in the 20-29 and 30-39 age groups and a notable percentage of multiple disabilities.¹ To address these challenges, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, in collaboration with Sarthak Educational Trust, has launched two initiatives: "Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs" in Delhi and "Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities" in Bhopal, West Delhi, and Gurugram, focusing on skill development and sustainable employment opportunities.

About the Project

Kotak's CSR Project on Education and Livelihood with the implementing agency Sarthak Educational Trust was a multi-year ongoing project started in January 2021 towards providing vocational skill training and placement support to PwDs and provide early intervention services to CwSN. Sarthak Educational Trust is a Delhi-based organisation established in 2008 to bring positive changes for PwDs through its efforts in the areas of Early Intervention, Inclusive Education, Skill Building, and Placement, Advocacy Generation. Their expertise led to a partnership with Kotak Mahindra Bank, whose CSR efforts focus on education and livelihoods, aiming to improve access, affordability, and quality of education, as well as enhancing employment and skill development for vulnerable communities. This report highlights Kotak's commitment through these projects, detailing methodology, objectives, findings, and recommendations.

2. Research Methodology

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the assessment is to evaluate the impact of the aforementioned two projects.

The specific objectives include:

1. To assess the impact of the project on its beneficiaries
2. To identify best practices, success stories and areas of improvement
3. To provide recommendations for scale-up/replication of project strategy

RESEARCH APPROACH

¹ <http://www.ccdisabilities.nic.in/resources/disability-india>

The study combined Qualitative and Quantitative research based on appreciative inquiry, using the globally renowned OCED-DAC 'REECIS' (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Coherence, and Sustainability) framework to assess the project's impact.

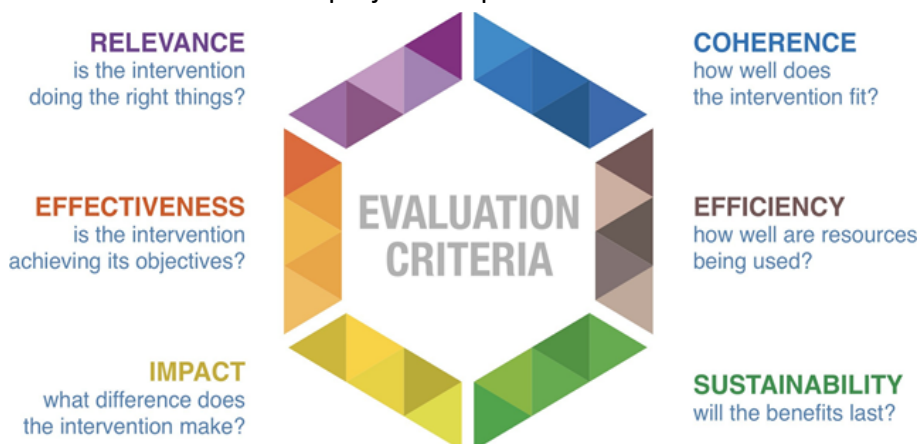


Image 1: REECIS Assessment Framework

DATA COLLECTION

The study used two methods to gather information: reviewing documents (desk research) and interviewing key stakeholders (KIIs). Desk research included project reports, disability data, and relevant articles. KIIs involved beneficiaries, their parents, project staff, employers, and community members. Interviews were conducted virtually to reach a wider audience. This combined approach aimed to understand the project's effectiveness, challenges, and impact.

RESEARCH SAMPLING

Between December 13th and December 22nd, 2023, 51 virtual interviews were conducted with multiple stakeholders. The breakdown of the stakeholders interviewed is given follows:

Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs Project*		Skill Building & Empowerment of PwDs Project***	
Stakeholder	No. of persons interviewed	Stakeholder	No. of persons interviewed
Parents	10	Beneficiaries	15
Anganwadi	2	Parents	9
NGO	2**	Mobilisers	3
Sarthak	2	Trainers	2
KMBL	1	Employers	1
Total	17	Total	30

Table 1: Sampling²

² * The selection process for the early intervention project involved considering factors such as location, type of disease, parents' education, and socioeconomic conditions

**NGO members could not be interviewed because the participants from the respective NGOs connected for the KIIs were not aware of the collaboration

***For the skill-building project, the sampling criteria included location, employment status, non-employee beneficiaries, salary, type of work, and designation.

3. Findings of the Study

The following sections present insights from desk research and qualitative interviews with 51 stakeholders. The analysis covers stakeholder perspectives, project impact, and good practices related to affordability, access, availability, equity, and opportunity.

3.1. Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs

Individualized Support for Children's Development

Upon enrolment, each child underwent a thorough behavioural assessment, through screening, behavioural assessment, and social skills to determine their developmental age relative to their chronological age. Tailored interventions were then implemented based on individual needs, with therapies selected dynamically and re-evaluated quarterly. Developmental milestones for the next quarter were set, informed by ongoing assessments. Monthly progress evaluations gauged intervention effectiveness. For instance, activities like sorting food grains, tearing and pasting papers, and colouring were used to improve attention span, with progress assessed monthly. Parents received guidance to replicate these activities at home to support the intervention process.

“Therapies are customized based on individual assessments. Occupational therapy addresses gross and fine motor skills, sensory issues, and daily living activities. Speech therapy focuses on communication skills and hearing impairment, while special education imparts functional academics and behaviour management skills.” –KII with Sarthak Team

Enhancing Child Development through Therapeutic Interventions

Occupational Therapy was essential for guiding children through key developmental milestones such as eating, brushing, standing, crawling, and neck holding. This therapy focuses on life skills and sensory issues, particularly in autistic children. Speech Therapy was crucial for developing effective communication skills, using activities like blowing and whistling to help children vocalize sounds and build vocabulary. Special Education aims to teach basic functional academic skills, including the English and Hindi alphabets and basic counting, tailored to the child's immediate needs. Parents provided positive feedback, noting that these interventions helped manage hyperactive behaviour, addressed dietary needs, and supported overall well-being.

Psychological education of Parents

Parent education and awareness were crucial components of the project. Therapists explained child assessment results to parents, clarifying diagnoses and necessary interventions, which guided personalized therapeutic approaches. Parent workshops further promoted awareness and collaboration, with therapists discussing each child's progress and setting realistic milestones. This empowered parents to actively participate in their child's development. The impact of these efforts was evident in parent feedback. Key informant interviews (KIIs) revealed parents' aspirations for their child's well-being, balanced with an understanding of potential limitations. They praised the support received through counselling sessions, the cooperative therapists and special educators, and ongoing

communication with the Sarthak team. However, some parents discontinued therapy sessions. Two out of ten interviewed parents attended only 2-3 sessions. Some parents wanted ongoing support after relocating, while others wished to resume sessions and stressed the importance of regular monitoring by the Sarthak team to observe changes in their children.

“I have undergone online training on accepting my child, managing hyperactivity, and understanding appropriate diet in such situations.” – KII with Parent

Embracing Digital Transformation for Continuous Therapy

The project swiftly adjusted its therapeutic interventions to cater to both online and offline platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring continuous support for child development. This proactive adaptation not only mitigated the impact of pandemic restrictions but also empowered parents and extended the project's reach. Recognising parents' initial reluctance towards online therapy, Sarthak took proactive measures to address their concerns by equipping them with essential skills through digital training initiatives. This approach enabled parents to conduct basic therapeutic activities at home using readily available items, thereby ensuring their children's progress amid the challenging circumstances of the pandemic. Embracing a continuous learning approach, the project team implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to facilitate seamless online therapy sessions. Despite initial difficulties faced by some parents in accessing digital devices, the team successfully navigated these communication barriers by employing alternative methods such as WhatsApp calls. During the peak of the pandemic's second wave, a considerable number of candidates transitioned from in-person to online therapies from April to June 2021. As restrictions eased, many individuals opted to return to in-person therapy sessions. Presently, Sarthak has introduced a hybrid training project, offering the flexibility for individuals near the centre to attend sessions in person while those at a distance can participate online. This approach combines learning in designated centres with remote learning methods, ensuring accessibility for all participants.

Fostering Collaboration

The project team actively collaborated with local Anganwadi centres, which played a crucial role in identifying cases requiring assistance and smoothly referring them to Sarthak for specialized support. Recognizing the unique needs of these children, Anganwadi workers understood the significance of specialized projects and referred them accordingly, providing comprehensive consultation and therapy. This collaboration primarily focused on maternal and child health, with the Sarthak team guiding Anganwadi workers in counselling pregnant women and emphasizing proper care during pregnancy. Leveraging the workers' community connections ensured effective outreach to households, promoting a holistic approach to community well-being. During interviews, Anganwadi workers expressed a need for additional training related to the project and fair compensation for their efforts.

“Even though I don't directly monitor the children and my role is to only connect the parents and children with Sarthak, sometimes, when I ask parents about their experience, they say the project (the early intervention project) helped them.”- Anganwadi Sevika

Hope and Progress: Positive Outcomes for Children and Families

During interactions with parents, notable improvements in children's demeanour were observed since their enrolment in the project. One parent quantified this improvement as a 40% positive shift, describing it as "little changes occurred." Some parents noted a positive transformation in their children's temperament towards a calmer and more composed state. Moreover, another parent highlighted an improvement in their child's speech, suggesting a positive development or increased engagement in verbal communication. Initially, parents expressed stress and concern about potential long-lasting developmental conditions affecting their children's brains upon enrolment. However, dedicated therapies and interventions often transformed this initial distress into relief as children achieved milestones such as walking and holding their heads. The interviewed parents, predominantly engaged in financially modest occupations like dairy work and daily-wage factory jobs, belonged to marginalized and vulnerable communities. Despite financial challenges, these parents maintained hope for a brighter future for their children.

3.2. Skill building & Empowerment of PwDs

Embracing Virtual Learning in the Face of Covid-19 Challenges

Of the total 906 beneficiaries, 303 were registered in the Bhopal centre, 301 in the Gurugram centre, and 302 in the West Delhi centre. However, all training sessions for the project were conducted online in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Sarthak team emphasized the benefits of virtual training over in-person sessions, noting its inclusivity and ability to attract participants from Delhi and beyond. Feedback highlighted the flexibility and convenience of virtual classes, expanding the project's reach and satisfaction among beneficiaries. While most responses were positive, there were mixed feelings about digital learning, indicating room for improvement. Initially met with scepticism, the transition to virtual training has gradually changed perceptions, overcoming challenges on both the team's and participants' ends.

"It was an awesome experience being part of this project because it all happened online, and I learned a lot of new things." - A beneficiary

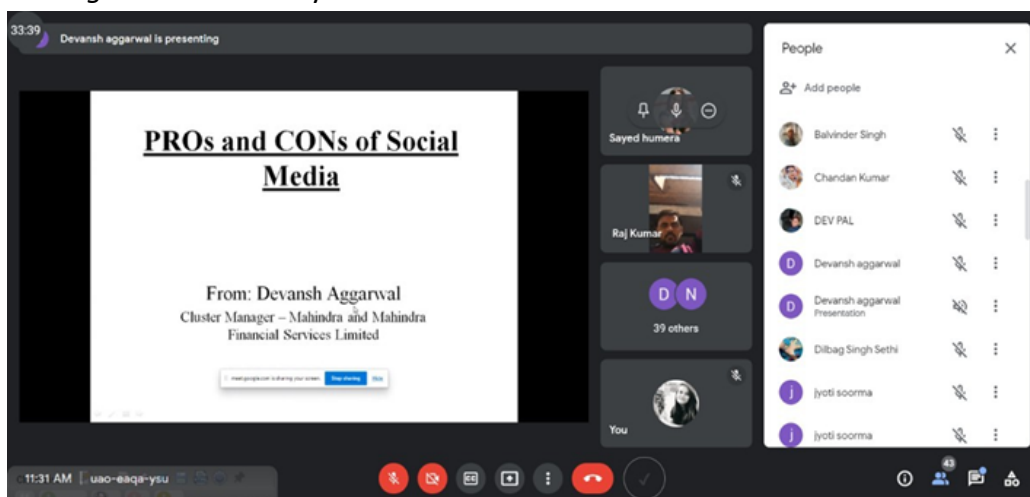


Image 2: Online Guest Lecture by Team Mahindra & Mahindra

Reaching Every Individual with Door-to-Door Mobilisation

A two-phase strategy recruited a total of 1097 candidates. First, community involvement played a key role. Community workers identified potential beneficiaries based on specific criteria and provided personalized career counselling to empower informed decisions. The second phase emphasized collaboration. Resource personnel actively sought out potentially overlooked individuals and directly contacted them to ensure no one was left behind. Through this robust approach, the project successfully mobilized a significant number of people with disabilities for training.

Carefully Designed Process

The positive results of the project are evident in its thoughtfully crafted processes. All registration and enrolment processes occurred online, forming batches, each comprising 15-20 beneficiaries. The candidates undergo baseline assessment tests wherein they are assessed on the following five parameters:

Category	Skills
Personal	Hygiene, appearance, posture, eye contact, cheerfulness
Communication	Gestures, verbal clarity, conversation, active listening, responding appropriately
Social	Follows rules, greets appropriately, offers help, welcomes visitors, follows routine, leadership, discipline
Occupational	Personal info, writing, reading, following instructions, understanding texts, calculations, measurements, percentages, using calculator, money handling, time management, public transport, emergency awareness, directions
Mobility & Hand Function	Balance, walking, climbing, pouring, cutting, dexterity, traffic awareness, safety with tools, hazard awareness, emergency contact

Table 2: Baseline Parameters

For a better understanding, the baseline assessment test results of five beneficiaries (picked by a randomized selection) were analysed. Their scores are mentioned in the table below:

Baseline Assessment Score						
Beneficiaries	Personal	Communication	Social behavior	Occupational	Mobility and hand functioning	Average %
Beneficiary 1	86.67%	81.67%	80%	76.88%	81.54%	81.40%
Beneficiary 2	60%	61.60%	77.50%	65%	56.90%	64.20%
Beneficiary 3	73.00%	76%	70%	76%	65%	72%
Beneficiary 4	90%	95%	90%	96%	90%	92.20%
Beneficiary 5	60%	60%	60%	65%	55%	60%

Table 3: Baseline Assessment Test Scores

The baseline scores across six domains—Personal, Communication, Social behaviour, Occupational, Mobility, and Hand Functioning—provided initial assessments of candidates. Beneficiary 1 demonstrated strong overall performance, excelling particularly in Personal and Occupational domains, while Beneficiary 2 exhibited moderate scores with notable strength in social behaviour. Beneficiary 3 displayed a well-rounded performance across all domains, while Beneficiary 4 stood out with exceptionally high scores indicating proficiency in all aspects. Conversely, Beneficiary 5

showed lower scores, suggesting potential challenges or areas for improvement. These baseline scores laid the foundation for tracking progress, designing tailored interventions, and providing necessary support to each beneficiary. The subsequent three-month training schedule was strategically organized, with the initial one-and-a-half months focusing on foundational skill development in basic English, life skills, and IT/computer skills. Mid-term assessments guided candidates in sector-specific skills for one month, with scores assigned based on multiple-choice answers.

The final 15 days of the project were dedicated to a pre-employment module, emphasizing interview preparation, resume building, and related topics to facilitate job placements. A comprehensive approach was adopted to match candidates with job opportunities, considering their performance over the three months, conducting end-term tests, and accommodating PwDs in job roles. Real-world exposure was provided through interactions with experts from various industries, enriching beneficiaries' understanding of workplace expectations. Feedback from beneficiaries highlighted positive experiences with virtual training sessions and skill acquisition in areas such as behaviour, work etiquette, computer basics, Excel, and English communication. Many attributed their success in the placement process to guest lectures and mock interviews, noting improvements in overall communication and English skills.

"I learned essential interview skills and improved my Spoken English. This was particularly helpful during my PhD, teaching me how to present myself effectively." - a beneficiary

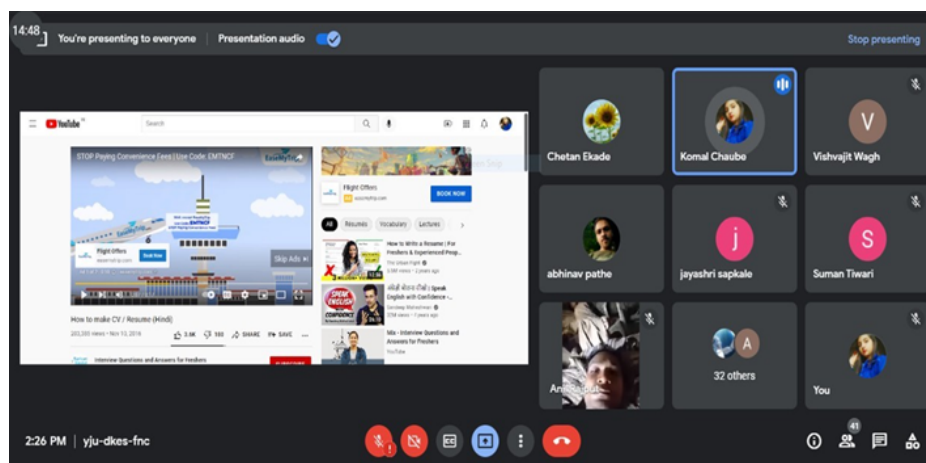


Image 3: Session on Resume Building

Focus on Parents

The involvement of parents played a crucial role in achieving positive results from this project. Before enrolment, teachers and trainers noticed a significant lack of awareness among parents regarding the education of their children with disabilities. The concerns expressed by parents about their child's job prospects before joining the course varied but shared a common theme – the shared desire for their children to secure employment, achieve financial independence, and stand on their own feet. To address this, workshops for parents were conducted on Saturdays, to boost their morale and motivation. These sessions offered basic awareness about the project, and it directly contributed to

improved attendance and retention rates among the beneficiary children. These workshops for parents bridged informational gaps and empowered both parents and beneficiaries with the knowledge necessary to navigate the educational and employment landscapes effectively.

“The Sarthak trainers made sure to go over things again and again until all the students understood. This helped my child a lot, and I appreciate the effort the trainers put into making sure everyone was on the same page.”- parent of a beneficiary

Tailored Interventions

The project's interventions excelled in customizing training to accommodate individual disabilities and interests. For instance, participants with locomotor disabilities received tailored training for roles suitable for seated work, ensuring comfort and maximising their potential for success in the workforce. Mid-term assessment tests played a crucial role in addressing individual student needs by evaluating further interventions required on a case-by-case basis. These assessments separately covered English, life skills, and IT/computer skills, including aspects like communication, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills. For better understanding, the mid-term assessment test results of five beneficiaries were analysed, evaluating their scores across key dimensions of English, Life Skills, and IT/Computer Skills.

Beneficiaries	Mid-Term Assessment Scores		
	English	Life Skills	IT/computer Skills
Beneficiary 1	26/30	20/24	37/45
Beneficiary 2	30/30	24/24	34/45
Beneficiary 3	28/30	20/24	35/45
Beneficiary 4	30/30	22/24	38/45
Beneficiary 5	30/30	22/24	36/45

Table 4: Mid-Term Assessment Test Scores

Industry-Ready Training

Out of the total 906 students, 532 were placed upon completing their training, while 103 became self-employed as of 2021. Some found employment with government institutions like the Indian Post Office, Indian Railway, and District Court Baghpat, while others joined private companies such as Zomato, Flipkart, Amazon, and Reliance Trends. An employer closely collaborating with Sarthak Education Trust shared insights, revealing that approximately 50-60 beneficiaries trained under the project are currently employed in various retail outlets of India Mart. These individuals typically earn monthly incomes ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 INR. Integration of PwD candidates into the workplace has been seamless, with beneficiaries citing acquired skills like Java (JVA) and SQL positively influencing their performance. Additionally, positive experiences have influenced enrolment decisions, as observed when one parent decided to enrol their child in the project after witnessing the success story of someone, they knew who had previously participated and secured a job. The success of the project can be attributed to comprehensive end-term assessment tests conducted for each trainee to determine their industry readiness.

For better understanding, the Sarthak Education Trust team provided a sample of test results, and the end-term assessment results of five randomly selected beneficiaries were analysed. Each beneficiary was evaluated across key skills in English, life skills, and IT/computer skills, with their scores summarized in the table below.

Beneficiaries	End-Term Assessment Score	
	Subject (job Role)	Score
Beneficiary 1	Retail CSA	23/30
Beneficiary 2	Sales	23/31
Beneficiary 3	Retail Associate	21/30
Beneficiary 4	CRM Domestic Voice	29/30
Beneficiary 5	Customer Sales Associate (Retail)	24/30

Table 5: End-Term Assessment Test Scores

The scores show satisfactory proficiency in job-related subjects like Retail Customer Service Associate, Sales, Retail Associate, CRM Domestic Voice, and Customer Sales Associate. Beneficiary 4 excelled in CRM Domestic Voice, indicating high competence. However, score variance suggests a need to review teaching methods or provide extra support to ensure uniform readiness. Some beneficiaries struggled to apply skills in marketing and online purchasing, highlighting areas for additional training.

Achieving Financial Security, Breaking Barriers & Boosting Confidence

Beneficiaries were primarily motivated by a desire for independence. The project facilitated employment opportunities and entrepreneurial ventures, addressing these aspirations. India Mart played a significant role in placing trainees, especially during COVID-19. PwD candidates at India Mart typically earned between 5,000 to 10,000 INR monthly, with some later earning 20,000 to 25,000 INR. Notable success stories include Beneficiary A, who secured a job at Microsoft and supports her family in Gurugram; Beneficiary B, who contributes to his family's finances through his job at HSBC in Ludhiana; and Beneficiary C from Haryana, who brings financial security to his parents, wife, and two children.

“Before the course, I never considered working because I lacked confidence. However, after completing the project, I started giving interviews and discovered that I could indeed do something. The course boosted my confidence and opened up new possibilities for me.” – A beneficiary

An HR Manager at India Mart highlighted the unique skills PwD candidates bring, such as creative video and picture editing, which enhance workplace diversity and innovation.

“Even though my current job is quite different from what I learned in the project, the confidence I gained back then is still making a big difference in my work now. The project has had a lasting impact on me.” – A beneficiary

4. Analysis of the Study

Criterion	Project Name	Description	Observations
Relevance	Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	Addresses developmental and speech-related difficulties in children.	1. Beneficiaries have diverse needs including hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, autism, and mental retardation. Many face challenges like speech issues, limited attention span, and developmental delays.
	Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Provides skill development opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.	1. Parents reported various disabilities among beneficiaries impacting reading, communication, and mobility to different extents. Examples include visual impairment, deafness, orthopaedic limitations, and locomotive disabilities. 2.
Effectiveness	Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	Provides Occupational, Speech, and Special Education therapy.	1. 190 enrolments in Occupational Therapy. 176 enrolments in Speech Therapy. 192 enrolments in Special Education. 2. Beneficiaries also adapted to virtual follow-up during COVID-19. 3. Used KPIs to track progress. - Utilized pre- and post-therapy videos and parent testimonials.
	Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Offers training in English, Life Skills, and IT/Computer Skills.	1. Consistently high scores in mid-term assessments. - Increased independence and reduced reliance on assistance 2. reported by parents.

Efficiency	Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	Achieved the planned target of 190 children in West Delhi during FY 2021-2022. - Detailed and organized strategy with quarterly goals broken down into monthly targets. - Progress tracked through videos and assessments. - Adaptability demonstrated through monthly follow-up calls with parents.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A structured approach ensures high efficiency in project execution. 2. Proactive measures are taken to adjust goals as needed.
	Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Surpassed enrolment goals in Bhopal, Gurugram, and West Delhi, totalling 906 participants against a target of 900. - Emphasis on trainer orientation and ongoing training. - Informal feedback collection process for continuous improvement. - A three-tiered approach to monitoring student progress.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effective planning and execution demonstrated by surpassing enrolment targets. 2. Commitment to continuous improvement is evident through the feedback collection process. 3. Comprehensive evaluation ensured through a three-tiered monitoring approach.
Coherence	Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	Aligns with government initiatives (RBSK, ICDS, SSA, IEDSS) for early identification and intervention. Complements existing efforts for a more comprehensive support system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributes to UN SDGs to ensure inclusive society.
	Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Aligns with government initiatives (NAP-SDP, CDEICs, CSR mandates) and India Mart's inclusive policies (India Mart Associate Project). Empower participants through government scheme awareness and resource access.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aligns with UN SDGs to ensure an inclusive society. 2. Fosters partnerships and active beneficiary connection to resources.

Impact	Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	Enrolled 184 in Occupational Therapy, 176 in Speech Therapy, and 192 in Special Education. - Therapy focused on key developmental milestones and sensory issues. - Positive community impact noted. - Varying pace of progress observed among children.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tangible improvements were observed, but progress varies significantly among cases. - Challenges include diverse timelines and premature discontinuation of therapy. 2. Positive community reception is evident through social media and referrals.
	Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Mobilised 1097 candidates, with 906 receiving training. - 532 candidates placed, 103 self-employed. - Placements in government and private sectors. - Various self-employment ventures pursued. - Success stories highlight project impact. - Positive parental feedback indicates broader skill enhancement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The project demonstrates success in employment and self-employment ventures. 2. Success stories showcase financial stability and contributions to family well-being. 3. Positive employer feedback emphasizes the unique skills of PwD candidates. The project's impact extends beyond job readiness to overall skill enhancement.
Sustainability	Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs (CwSN)	Builds awareness and accessibility in low-income communities. - Network with Aanganwadi workers, NGOs, and parents for long-term support. - Customized therapeutic interventions for lasting benefits. - Adapted to online therapy during COVID-19. - Learnings inform future early intervention initiatives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contributes to lasting positive outcomes for children.
	Skill Building & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD)	Partnership with Kotak Mahindra Bank enables project growth. - E-learning platform provides global access to resources. - Dedicated support for a year after job placement. -	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures long-term career success for PwDs

		Alumni network provides peer-to-peer support and mentorship. - Online platform offers lifelong job support.	
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Table 6: Analysis

5. Limitations/Challenges of the Assessment

1. **Diverse Parental Responses:** Interviews with parents revealed varied responses due to their limited understanding, often caused by low education levels or illiteracy. This complicated communication during assessments, but the Sarthak team managed to achieve clarity through careful explanations.
2. **Extended Timeframe Impact:** The extended duration since project completion made it difficult for most beneficiaries to recall specific details and experiences. For example, one parent mentioned their child received lip therapy but couldn't remember the outcomes due to the time lapse. Similarly, another mentioned speech therapy without extensive details, suggesting it occurred a year or two ago.
3. **Inconsistent Assessment Parameters:** Inconsistent parameters in baseline, midline, and end-line assessments posed challenges in accurately evaluating trainee progress. Initial assessments covered subjects like English, life skills, and IT, while end-term assessments were more sector-specific, complicating the evaluation process. As informed by Sarthak, this is because assessment parameters are defined based on structure of the program. In the initial 1.5 months, the focus is on basic skills; therefore, the assessment questions and parameters are designed to evaluate the understanding of these skills. The following month is dedicated to sector-specific training, so the assessment parameters are adjusted to measure the knowledge level in that sector. Consequently, the assessment criteria are tailored to the subjects taught to the beneficiaries. Hence, it is not feasible to have constant assessment parameters from start to finish, as different subjects are covered throughout the program.

6. Recommendations

Early Intervention of Children with Special Needs

Area of Improvement	Recommendations
Community Awareness Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop targeted campaigns for early detection and intervention, distributing materials through community centers and healthcare facilities. - Engage frontline workers to educate parents about early detection methods.

Parental Engagement Strategies	- Implement personalized follow-up calls and establish a parent support network.
Expand Online Resources	- Create an online resource hub with educational materials and consider developing a mobile app for tracking progress.
Continuous Professional Development	- Provide ongoing staff training and encourage collaboration with experts through workshops or guest lectures.
Long-Term Impact Assessment	- Implement a systematic assessment strategy and publish annual reports showcasing project success stories.
Partnership Strengthening	- Tailor training sessions for Aanganwadi centres and explore partnerships with other organizations to expand resources.
Digital Transformation Enhancement	- Enhance digital platforms for online therapies and gather parent feedback for improvements.
Financial Sustainability Planning	- Develop a sustainability plan, exploring grant opportunities and income-generating activities.
Inclusive Communication Strategies	- Implement inclusive communication methods and translate materials into community languages for accessibility.
Advocacy for Worker Compensation	- Advocate for fair compensation for Anganwadi workers and collaborate with local authorities to address concerns.
Research and Documentation	- Encourage research initiatives within the project and disseminate findings through academic publications and conferences.

Skill Building & Empowerment of PwDs

Area of Improvement	Recommendations
Incorporate Advanced Training in AI	- Introduce training on AI fundamentals to meet beneficiaries' educational levels.
Address Dissatisfaction in Training Content	-Establish a feedback system for continuous improvement.
Enhance Outreach and Local Opportunities	- Offer training in local languages if feasible
Streamline Online Administrative Processes	- Digitize administrative tasks for faster process outcomes such as certificate issuance.
Reintroduce Offline Classes for Enhanced Impact	- Reintegrate in-person training sessions. - Tailor training based on individual needs.

Strengthen Corporate Sensitization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with corporates to enhance workplace inclusivity. - Address concerns of teasing and mental harassment through awareness campaigns.
Diversify Job Placement Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with local businesses for broader job opportunities in addition to the current job opportunities that are already made available to the beneficiaries

Tables 7 & 8: Recommendations

7. Conclusion

The projects have empowered children with special needs (CwSN) and Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) through effective interventions and flexible support. They have provided transformative identification, assessment, personalized therapy, and family support for children, illustrated by success stories like a child admitted to the National Association for the Blind. For PwDs, comprehensive skill development, virtual learning, and placement support have led to financial independence and social integration, as reflected in high placement rates and positive feedback. Despite challenges such as diverse parental responses, extended timeframes affecting recall, and inconsistent assessment parameters, these initiatives leave a hopeful legacy. They demonstrate that well-planned efforts can empower people with disabilities and build an inclusive society, driven by kindness and genuine efforts, ensuring everyone has the chance to succeed. As their impact grows, the future for children with special needs and individuals with disabilities will be brighter than ever.

Annexure

Abbreviations

FY	Financial Year
KMBL	Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited
PwD	People with Disability
KII	Key Informant Interview

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References

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Project Documents Reviewed

- Need Assessment Reports
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Quarterly Progress Reports
- MIS Data: List of Beneficiaries
- Mid-Term Assessment Test Scores
- Audited Utilization Certificates
- Project Completion Reports

About NuSocia

NuSocia was established in 2017 with the mission to enable the impact ecosystem by delivering projects with an evident impact. Incubated at the NSRCEL, IIM Bangalore, we are a team of consultants, social sector professionals, data scientists, and researchers with a common passion for generating ideas that matter to people and the planet. We work with corporations, governments, foundations, and non-profits to help them maximise, manage, measure, and communicate their social impact. Clients select us for our expertise and ability to connect at the grassroots level, thus creating and delivering practical solutions to their unique requirements. As a knowledge-driven organization, we focus on research and collaboration to design innovative solutions. We work across the entire CSR lifecycle, offering services in CSR strategy, needs assessment, project design, implementation, monitoring & evaluation, impact assessments, communication, and more. With a global consulting team, localized partnerships, and a 60% female workforce, we are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse environment focused on equality, empowerment, and mutual respect.

Today, NuSocia has strengthened its position as a social impact advisory built on the core pillars of design thinking, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing.