
Impact Assessment Report on Kotak-IIM-B-NSRCEL Women Startup CSR Project on Education & Livelihood

Location: Bangalore, Karnataka

Prepared For



Kotak Mahindra Bank

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Kotak Mahindra Bank provided seed funding for women entrepreneurs enrolled in the Women Startup Program of NSRCEL of IIM Bangalore as a part of its CSR project in Education and Livelihood (Entrepreneurship).

The SoulAce team would like to thank all the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the Women Startup Program of NSRCEL of IIM Bangalore, supported by KMBL for seed funding. The Research team would like to express its sincere gratitude to Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. for reposing their faith in SoulAce to conduct this study. The team would like to thank the management of implementing agency NSRCEL for sharing the required data, information, and support for conducting this study.

ABBREVIATIONS

IIM Indian Institute of Management

CSR Corporate Social Responsibility

WSP Women Startup Program

KMBL Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited

NSRCEL Nadathur S. Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning

UN United Nations

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

GPS Geo Positioning System

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kotak Mahindra Bank provided seed funding for women entrepreneurs enrolled in the Women Startup Project of NSRCEL of IIM Bangalore as a part of its CSR project in Education and Livelihood (Entrepreneurship). A mixed approach using quantitative and qualitative tools was adopted to assess the impact of the seed funding on 20 finalists and 20 semi-finalists in the program for FY2020-21.

The major findings of the study are:

- 68% of the respondents came from upper-middle-class families and 32% from middle-class families
- A good regional diversity was observed with 16% of the respondents hailing from Karnataka, 12% from Maharashtra, and 4% from the states of Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and West Bengal
- All women entrepreneurs in the program exhibited an aptitude for entrepreneurship and had varied educational backgrounds.
- 92% of the respondents found the seed funding very helpful in starting and running their businesses.
- 100% of the respondents stated that the Women Startup Program gave them the motivation to move from ideation to actual product, facilitated future funding rounds, and provided better market linkages.
- Employment creation varied, with 8% of respondents able to employ more than 20 members, while 40% of respondents were able to employ between 2 and 5 members.
- Revenue generation varied, with 36% of respondents generating revenue between Rs. 1 lakh to 5 lakh, and 16% generating revenue in the range of Rs. 6 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh.
- Only 52% of the respondents were able to raise further funds.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

NSRCEL-IIMB is an accelerator firm and incubation hub located at the Indian Institute of Management in Bangalore, India. In the financial year 2020-21, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited collaborated with IIM Bangalore, NSRCEL to provide seed funding to 200 women entrepreneurs enrolled in the Women Start Up program, with the aim of helping ambitious and inventive women entrepreneurs transform their ideas into successful businesses.

As the sole sponsor of the project, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd provided the necessary resources to empower female business owners to plan the future of their companies. The WSP was specifically designed for women managing early and ideation-stage companies and aimed to enhance their entrepreneurial and managerial abilities.

Through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), the project equipped participants with the information they needed to develop their initial concept. Selected participants entered a three-month online pre-incubation phase of the project, during which they received guidance and mentoring in running a business and creating a prototype. Those who made it to the final round were invited to participate in NSRCEL's Incubation program, where they worked on improving their product and expanding their operations.

Overall, the Women Startup Project at IIM Bangalore is a testament to Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd's commitment to social responsibility and promoting women entrepreneurship.

Key features of this program include:

- **Mentoring:** Unparalleled access to a wide variety of mentors, including business leaders, entrepreneurs, and VCs.
- **Network:** Links to potential customers, partners in business expansion and technology, and experts in related fields
- **Need Assessment:** Focusing on entrepreneurship development and ecosystem mapping needs
- **Legal & Compliance:** Pro-bono legal assistance from attorneys and company secretaries.
- **Business Acceleration:** Possibilities to present businesses at regular intervals at startup events or exhibitions.
- **Free and Open Online Course (MOOC):** A comprehensive online introduction to the fundamentals of entrepreneurship, with a focus on developing a customer-validated business model.

After a selection process, entrepreneurs were provided with business training during a three-month virtual Pre-Incubation Program to advance the development of their prototypes. The finalists were chosen for Incubation by NSRCEL to ensure that they have an environment to develop and expand their innovations. This study aims to estimate the social impact of Kotak Mahindra Bank's seed fund contribution to women entrepreneurship enrolled as a part of the project.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted to assess the impact of KMBL's seed fund contribution to women entrepreneurs enrolled in the project. The research followed a systematic and logical search for new and useful information on the subject matter, adhering to scientific principles and methods to minimize bias and subjectivity. The study aimed to gather reliable and objective data that can stand the test of time, and avoid assumptions or speculations.

The study employed research approaches, methods, and techniques to achieve the research objective. The research problem, which was the starting point of the investigation, was to assess the impact created by the seed fund contribution on women entrepreneurs. The characteristics of scientific research, including objectivity, ethical neutrality, reliability, testability, and transparency, were upheld throughout the study.

Research Design

A Descriptive Research Design was used in the study to narrate the program, process, and outcome and to assess the impact created by the seed fund contribution. To provide a comprehensive perspective of the research insights, a mixed approach consisting of both Quantitative and Qualitative tools was employed. For the Quantitative study, a closed-ended survey tool was constructed, and for deeper probing and to gain enriched knowledge of the research problem, a qualitative interview guide was prepared.

Mobile Application Platform for Data Collection

SoulAce created a mobile application platform for data collection, which was used by the field crew to carry out the research. The software enabled real-time data entry, data upload, GPS position information, questionnaires, and the option to photograph each respondent to facilitate communication with the project's beneficiaries.



Objective of the Research Study

- To understand the scenario of awareness and access to funding options by the women entrepreneurs selected for the Women Startup Program during the Pre- Intervention stage.
- To obtain insights on how the seed funding was helpful to the women entrepreneurs to move their business concept from the ideation stage to the production stage.
- To assess whether the Women Startup Program gave the required impetus to stay in the business ventured into.
- To understand the current status of the business activity, in terms of employment, revenue, and profit generated.

Sampling Design

Purposive Sampling was used in this research study as the intent was to find out the impact of seed funding among the 20 finalists and 20 semi-finalists (40 in all) of the Women Startup Program from among the 11,500 applicants of NSRCEL funded by KMBL.

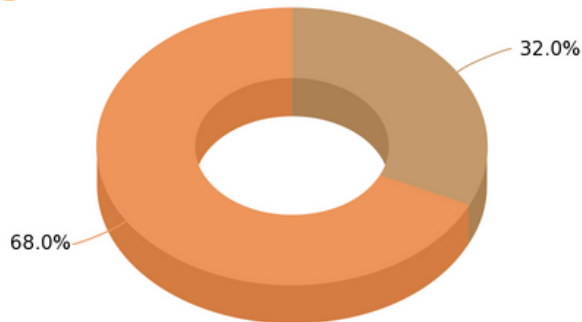
Key Stakeholders



CHAPTER 3: BACKGROUND OF THE BENEFICIARIES

The study collected data on the background of the beneficiaries in terms of geography, social status, educational attainment as well as prior experience in entrepreneurship to understand the diversity of women that the project covers.

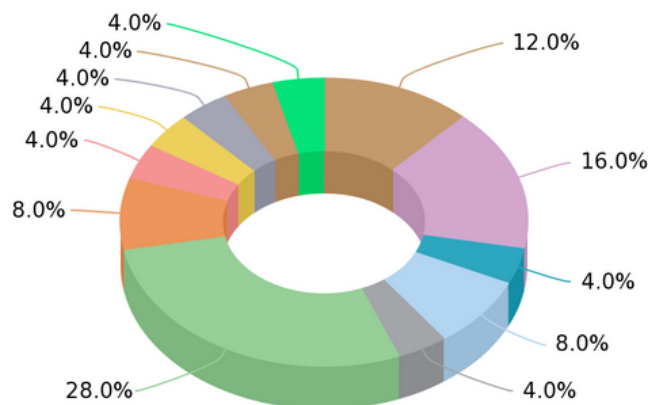
Percentage distribution of respondents by Social Status



● Middle Class ● Upper Middle Class

When the respondents were asked about their social class in order to understand their economic background, 68% of the respondents stated that they belonged to upper-middle-class families, while 32% of the respondents stated that they belonged to middle-class families.

Percentage distribution of respondents by their geographical location



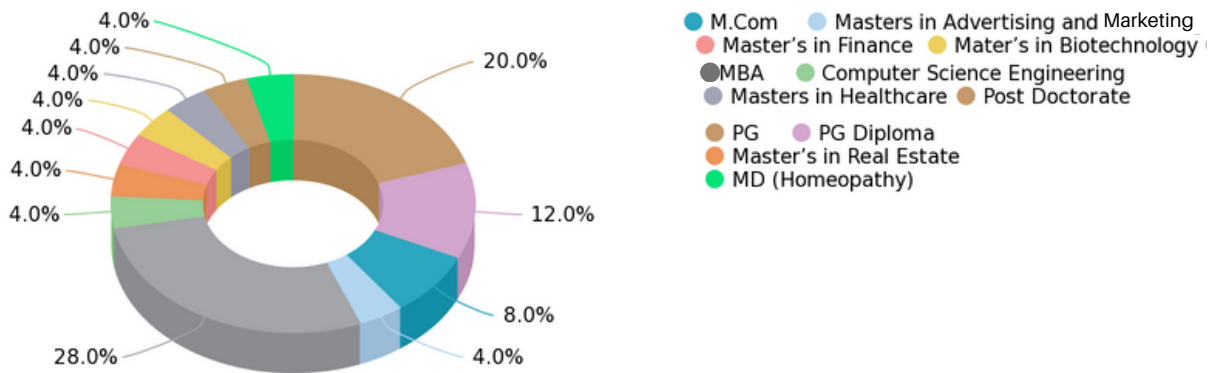
● Maharashtra ● Karnataka ● Chhattisgarh ● Haryana ● Tamil Nadu ● Uttar Pradesh ● Kerala ● Telangana
● Madhya Pradesh ● Rajasthan ● Jharkhand ● Bengal

The Women Startup Program has successfully accommodated women entrepreneurs from various states and regions across India, as shown in the chart. The participants hailed from Uttar Pradesh (28%), Karnataka (16%), Maharashtra (12%) and other states as Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and West Bengal (4% each), highlighting the program's inclusivity and diversity.

“It was during the pandemic that I was going through multiple personal losses, and yet there was the WSP who stood like a rock throughout - it the WSP which stood like a rock throughout- it was my self-transformational phase and I will forever be grateful to Kotak for their support.”

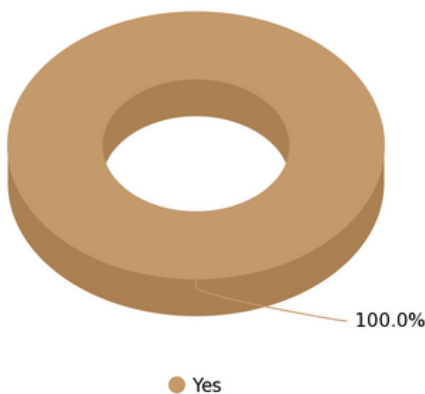
-Leanne Rose Pais, Founder, The Unopened Box

Percentage distribution of respondents by their educational level



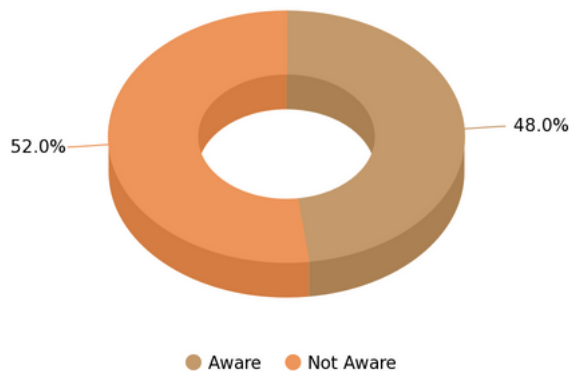
Women entrepreneurs enrolled in the program had diverse educational backgrounds ranging from M.D (Homeopathy) to P.C. Diploma, 28% had an MBA, 20% had some post graduation degree and 12% had a P.C. Diploma. Other educational backgrounds represented included M.Com, Post Doctorate, Master in Healthcare, Master in Biotechnology, Finance, Real-estate, B.E. Computer Science, Master in Advertising and Marketing. The program has effectively supported women from different educational backgrounds.

Percentage distribution of respondents by their Prior experience in entrepreneurship



All respondents confirmed prior entrepreneurship experience, indicating the program identified candidates with an aptitude for business. Successful entrepreneurship requires the right skill set and aptitude and the program has rightly identifies such talent to nurture.

Percentage distribution of respondents by their understanding and awareness of the various funding options

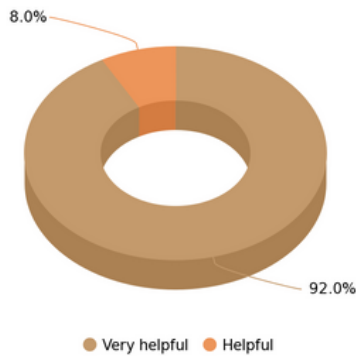


When the respondents were asked whether they were aware of the various funding options prior to the intervention, only 48% of the respondents stated that they were aware, while 52% stated that they were not aware of the funding options.

CHAPTER 4: BENEFICIARIES PERCEPTION ON THE BENEFITS OF THE INTERVENTION

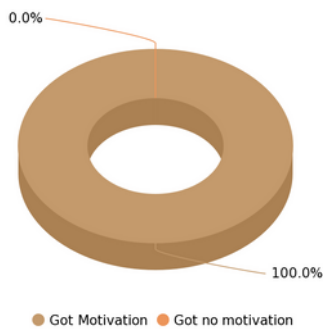
The study focused on deep interactions with the direct beneficiaries to gauge their perception of the benefits of the different aspects of the intervention in general and the seed funding in particular to understand the immediate and enduring impacts of the program.

Percentage of respondents' opinions on seed funding



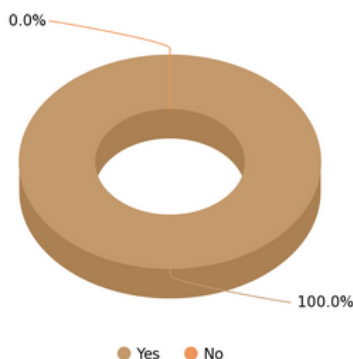
When the respondents were asked whether they found the seed funding to be helpful, almost all respondents i.e., 92%, opined that the seed funding was very helpful while 8% stated it was somewhat helpful.

Percentage of respondents reported whether they got the motivation to move from ideation to actual product or not



When the respondents were asked whether they got the motivation to move from ideation to actual product or not, all the respondents agreed that the Women Startup Program motivated them very much. Respondents also stated that without the Women Startup Program, they would not have gotten the motivation to move from the ideation stage to realizing the actual product.

Percentage of respondents who reported whether the seed funding from Kotak facilitated future funding rounds

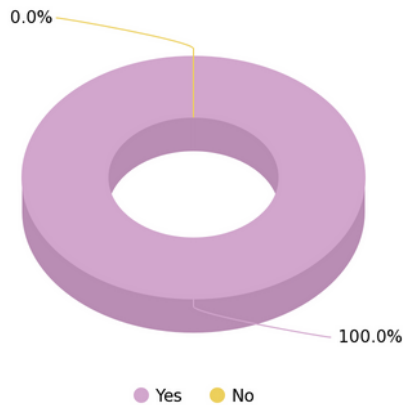


When the respondents were asked whether the seed funding from Kotak facilitated future funding rounds or not, all the respondents unanimously agreed that the seed funding had in fact facilitated the future funding rounds, which helped them to establish their business. All the respondents attributed their ability to procure funds only from the program.

“I personally explored a huge change in my personality and experienced a massive learning phase. My confidence has leveled up after WSP happened to me and my words perhaps can never express my gratitude towards Kotak, NSRCEL, my mentors, and IIMB.”

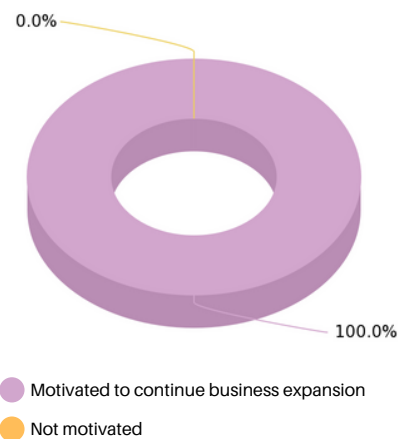
- Preksha Prasad, Founder, Jar'ganic

Percentage of respondents reported whether they are getting better marketing linkages or not



When the respondents were asked whether they got better market linkages because of the program, all the respondents unanimously agreed that they got better market linkages through the Women Startup Program.

Percentage of respondents reported whether they are getting motivation to continue business expansion post-incubation



When the respondents were asked whether they got the motivation to continue business expansion post-incubation all the respondents agreed to the same. The respondents stated that what they learned from the Women Startup Program was responsible for this motivation.

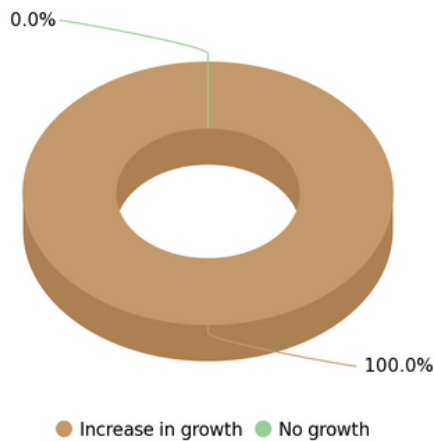
“WSP and Kotak have given me exposure that I could never think of in my lifetime. The platform I have achieved after being a part of this cohort is beyond imagination. I am forever thankful to Kotak and IIMB for their support.”

- Elizabeth Thomas, Founder, Phonologix

CHAPTER 5: CURRENT STATUS OF THE BUSINESS

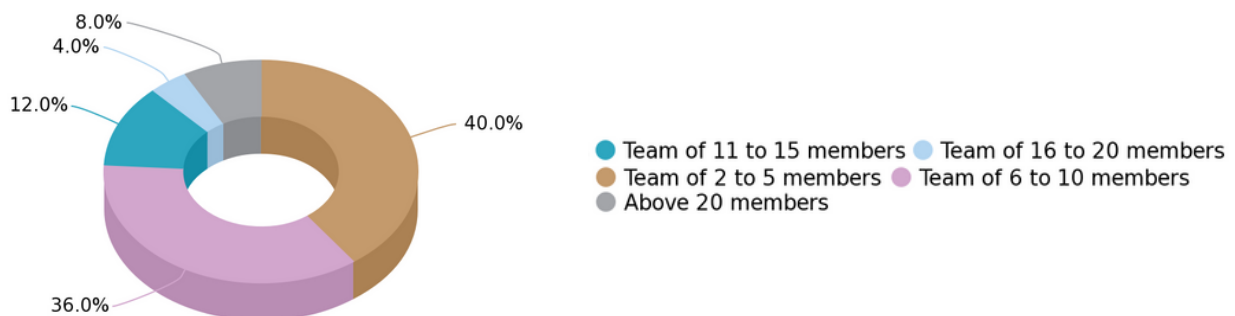
The study gathered information on the current status of the business launched by the beneficiaries in terms of whether it is operational currently, the industry vertical it caters to, its target group and clientele, and revenue and profit generated, to understand the enduring impacts of the seed funding.

Percentage of respondents who reported about the stage of the business life cycle



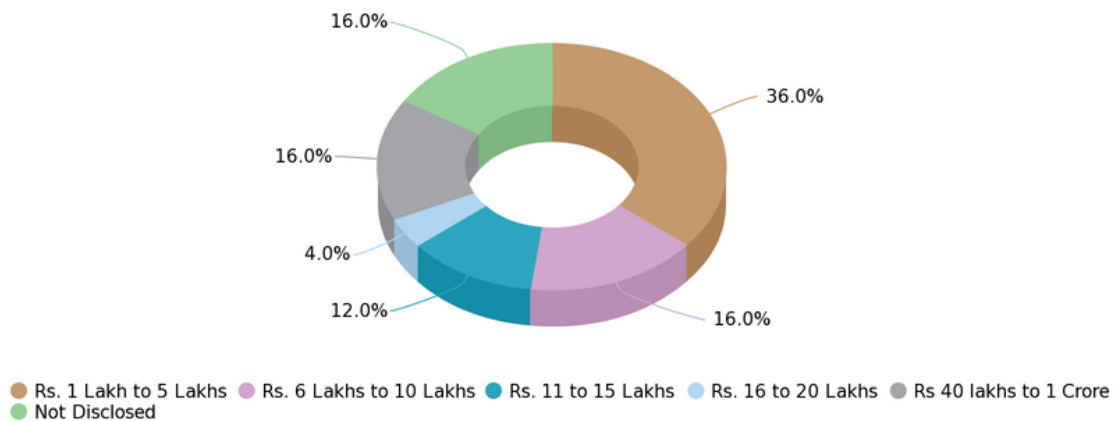
When the respondents were asked about what stage of life cycle their businesses were in, all the respondents stated that it was in the growth stage and their businesses are steadily progressing with increasing sales.

Percentage of respondents reported about the employment generated/ team size in the venture till now



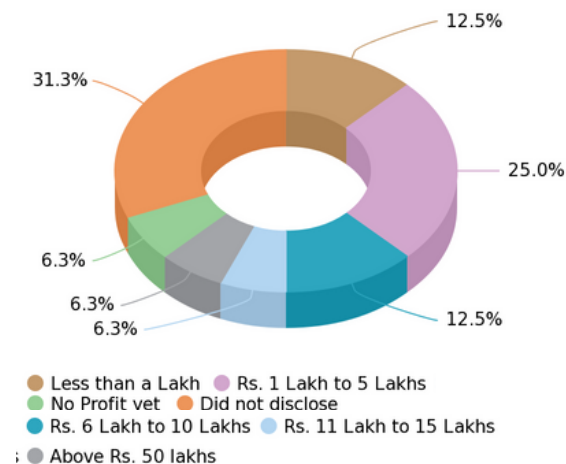
When the women entrepreneurs were asked whether their business venture led to employment generation, 8% of the respondents stated that they were able to employ more than 20 members while 40% of the respondents stated that they were able to employ between 2 to 5 members. 36% of the respondents were able to employ between 6 to 10 members, while 12% of the respondents employed between 11 to 15 members, and 4% of the respondents employed between 16 to 20 members. Thus, it can be said that the Women Startup Program not only led to the establishment of business ventures by entrepreneurs but also created employment opportunities, thereby resulting in livelihood for more people.

Percentage of respondents reported about the revenue generated if any (Rs)



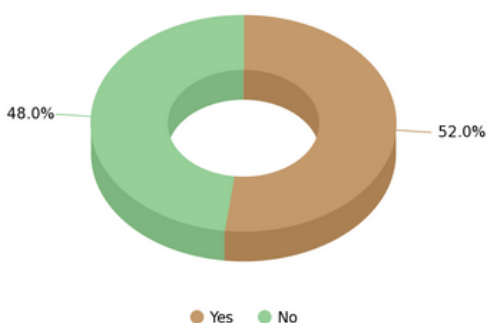
When the respondents were asked about the revenue generated by their business ventures, the largest proportion of respondents, that is 36%, stated that they generated revenue between Rs. 1 lakh to 5 lakh, while 16% of the respondents generated revenue in the range of Rs. 6 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh. On the highest income range, 16% of the respondents generated income between Rs. 40 lakh to 1 crore. 12% of the respondents were generating revenue between Rs. 11 lakh to Rs. 15 lakh. There were also 4% of the respondents earning a revenue between Rs. 16 lakh to Rs. 20 lakh.

Percentage of respondents who reported about the profit generated, if any



When the respondents were asked about the profit generated, the largest section of the respondents, that is 40%, stated that they did not generate any profit as such now.

Percentage of respondents reported whether they raised any further funding or not



When the respondents were asked whether they were able to raise further funds or not, only 52% of the respondents answered in affirmative, while 48% replied that they did not raise any further funds.

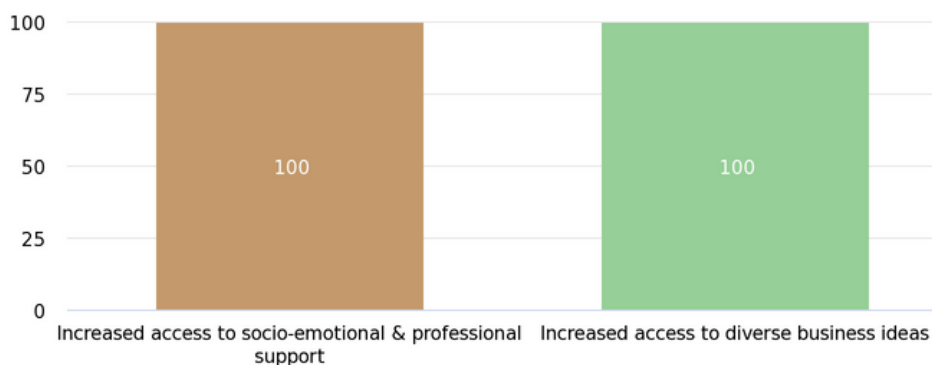
Percentage of respondents who reported about the impact on different areas of empowerment



When the respondents were asked whether their involvement in the WSP led to their empowerment, all the respondents agreed that it gave them increased participation in the decision-making process in the family, and an equal percentage of respondents (100%) stated that it led to increased economic independence.

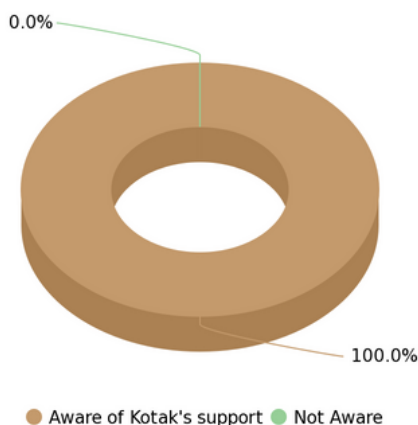
There was also unanimous agreement (100%) among the women entrepreneurs that it led to their increased financial contribution to their families and increased confidence and leadership qualities.

Percentage of respondents who reported about access to peer support



When the respondents were asked whether the WSP led to increased peer support, all the respondents (100%) stated that the program led to increased access to socio-emotional and professional support and an equal percentage stated that it led to increased access to diverse business ideas.

Percentage of respondents who are aware of Kotak's support



All the respondents (100%) were well aware that the WSP's seed funding was done through Kotak.

RELEVANCE

In India, with a large working-age population of 112 million between the ages of 20 and 24, it is not feasible for the government to create employment opportunities for everyone. However, India has a thriving startup ecosystem with over 77,000 recognized startups contributing significantly to the country's GDP. Research shows that companies with women leadership generate higher returns on equity than the global average. The Women Startup Program of NSRCEL, funded by Kotak, is highly relevant as it plays a crucial role in creating employment opportunities and reducing unemployment in the country.

RATING ● ● ● ● ●

COHERENCE

The CSR Intervention of seed funding the NSRCEL program by KMBL is highly coherent as it helps in furthering SDG goals:

- 5 - Gender Equality,
- 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal no.
- 10- Reduced Inequalities
- 12- Responsible Production and Consumption.

The program is also in coherence with the initiatives of the GOI in promoting startup culture in India.

RATING ● ● ● ● ●



EFFECTIVENESS

The program is effective in the sense that it has met its primary goal of facilitating all women finalists to launch and run a business successfully. But in terms of the objective towards revenue generation, a big breakthrough has not yet been achieved for a substantial number of candidates. This could be because the business is yet in the germination and growth stage. It can take some time for these businesses to show the desired results. Hence, the program is considered to be reasonably effective in terms of meeting its goals.

RATING ● ● ● ● ●

EFFICIENCY

The program has a smart design that leverages infrastructure and human & material resources of a premiere management institute to deliver the support at different stages of the training. Further, considering the amount of money granted as seed fund and the revenue generated by Individual Businesses, the program can be stated to be highly efficient in nature.

RATING ● ● ● ● ●

IMPACT

The Women's start-up program helped the women entrepreneurs to move their business concepts from the Ideation stage to the Production Stage and also substantially motivated them with inputs on market linkages, awareness of funding options, peer support, consistent mentoring, and guidance. All the women entrepreneurs find their businesses to be growing well and they have also created employment opportunities for other women in their Business enterprises, thereby creating further social impact on the lives of the employed women. Hence, the program can be stated to be highly impactful.

RATING ● ● ● ● ●

SUSTAINABILITY

Since the nature of the program is that of a seed grant, and once the startups are initiated, the businesses are sustained with their own funds generated. Hence, the program is highly sustainable in nature.

RATING ● ● ● ● ●

CONCLUSION

The study has found that the Women Startup Program funded by Kotak was highly successful in creating women entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas. The program provided adequate input to the women entrepreneurs on how to conceive a program, create a project proposal, approach the funders, and also how to create links with markets. The program provided sufficient impetus to women shortlisted for the program to ideate the concept, incubate, and innovate resulting in a thriving business model. The program also resulted in creating further employment opportunities thereby impacting more lives apart from the potential of contributing to the GDP of the country.

KMBL's support to women entrepreneurs and start-ups has played a critical role in promoting gender equality and economic growth. By providing access to funding, training and resources, the project has set the cornerstone for empowering women to create successful businesses and contribute to the country's overall economic development. In the long term, increased participation of women in entrepreneurship would lead to job creation, innovation and greater gender equality, which would benefit not only women but also the society as a whole.