

# **MAKING A CSR INITIATIVE MORE MEANINGFUL- A CASE STUDY OF KARMAARTH, KARMA, THE "DEED" AND ARTH, THE "MEANING", AN INDIAN NGO**

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## **CASE DESCRIPTION**

*The primary subject matter of this case concerns the issues and obstacles that a social initiative “Karmaarth” had to confront in its endeavor of expansion and sustenance. The case also highlights its achievements in the past years despite the challenges of prejudiced patriarchal structure, illiteracy, ignorance and sheer unwillingness of the under-privileged section of the society. The potential audiences/participants who may have relevant take-away from the case will include under-graduate and post-graduate management students in various years of their program and participants such as business executives and for participants of workshops and seminars on entrepreneurship. The case can be discussed in a 90 min session. The preparation will include case reading and basic knowledge of Social entrepreneurial ventures/NGOs in any cultural set-up. This would be 2-3 h of outside class preparation time.*

## **CASE SYNOPSIS**

*The case looks at Karmaarth, a CSR initiative of Jagannath Gupta Memorial Educational Society, guided under the mentorship of Mr. Manish Gupta, a social entrepreneur, a philanthropist and the chairman of the society. Established in the year 2010, Karmaarth has brought a change in the lives of over thousands of people belonging to socially and economically deprived sections of society. The NGO imparts employability skills through vocational training programs to the underprivileged. It develops community network initiatives in various development outreach programs encompassing health, adult literacy and primary education.*

*“Overwhelmed by the response received at Karmaarth’s Diwali Mela in the Mundka branch, Mr. Gupta congratulated his team on the success of the event. Looking at the spark in the eyes of his team and the beneficiaries he convinced himself in an instant that this venture has to become bigger and get better. He envisioned the opportunities and assessed his resource constraints but also avowed that investing funds, embracing philanthropic models or conducting skill development trainings and workshops will not ensure long-term impact. Karmaarth needs to create a robust framework and processes to monitor regulation of sustainable community programs. To map the success, appraise and revise the existing programs and initiatives by aligning them with the market needs will help in crafting the future programs and policies.”*

*The case gives an insight into Karmaarth’s notable contribution in the skill development mission of India.*

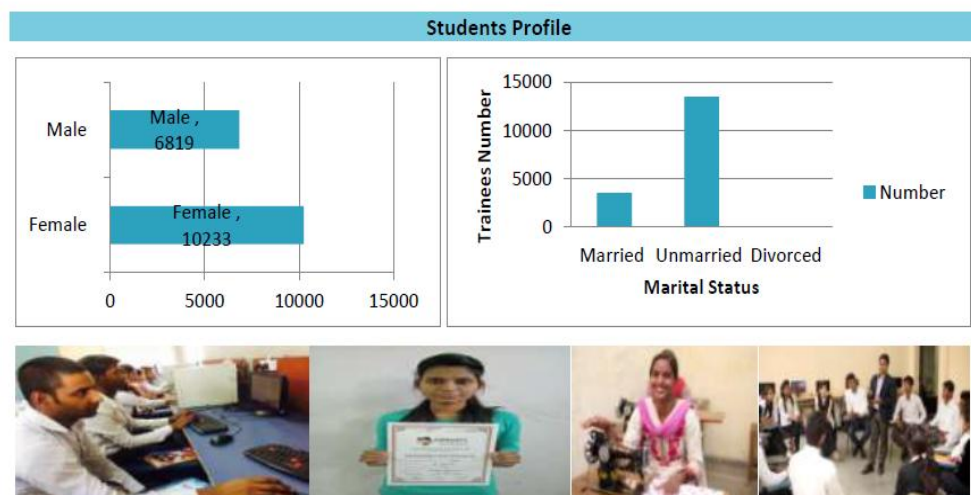
## CASE BODY

### Background

India's unemployment rate of 13.1% for the youth is at par with the global unemployment rate (International Labour Organisation, 2016). Of the 470 million belonging to the working age-group in India, only 10% receive any training or have an access to skilled employment opportunities (National Sample Survey, 2012). India currently faces a dearth of well-trained and skilled workforce. Recent government initiatives such as “*Skill India Mission*” aim to train and create an employable skilled talent pool of 500 million people by 2020. The prime Minister's efforts in the direction through National Skill Development Mission and new National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launched in the year 2015 have set the stage for an entrepreneurship driven economy. India must focus on scaling up skill training efforts to meet the demands of employers and drive economic growth.

Besides the Government, corporate social responsibility advances, can improve the scale, quality and sustainability of youth skills development programs.

Karmaarth, the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of Jagannath Gupta Memorial Society, founded in year 2010, works extensively towards the empowerment of deprived youth and women by imparting employability skills and facilitate them to get employment in organized sectors. Over 17000 beneficiaries have been trained within seven years of its inception. The prime objective of Karmaarth is to ensure that young entrants are well-equipped with knowledge and skills needed for entry level jobs. Karmaarth refers to Karma+Arth, where Karma is the deed and Arth are those deeds that contribute towards the real meaning of our life. Karmaarth offers Vocational Training Programmes for domestic servants, illiterate housewives, children and unemployed youths. Employability skills are provided in domains such as Electronics, Mobile repairing, Beauty culture, Heena designing, Photography and Radio Programming. The mission is to educate, empower and enable individuals to make a positive difference in their lives and society at large (Figure 1).



**FIGURE 1**  
**STUDENT PROFILE**

## The Organization

1. Educates slum children.
2. Imparts employability skills through vocational training programs to the underprivileged school dropouts and uneducated Youth.
3. Develops community network initiatives encompassing health, adult literacy and primary education.
4. Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
5. Promoting self-reliance among the underprivileged section of the society.
6. Empowering women by imparting literacy skills, vocational training and legal knowledge.

Karmaarth envisions an equitable society where every individual works with self-confidence and self-worth.

## The Mentor

The role of a mentor is paramount in any social initiative. A torch bearer who leads the way and shows the path is foremost. Mr. Manish Gupta, the Chairman of Jagannath Gupta Memorial Educational Society is the man behind the story. He opines that, *“the responsiveness and the need to bring some change in the society was the prime motivating factor to start this initiative, which has now become extremely popular in terms of geographical reach and number of enrolment within a short span of time”*. Mr. Gupta is of the view that *“India has rich talent pool of underprivileged youth who can deliver the best of their potential and it is their right to get the basic necessities of life.”*

The success of the social initiative gets reflected in the performance of the pass-outs across industries. The financially independent and socially responsible students are also budding entrepreneurs who will benefit from the *“Make in India”* wave and skill development initiative of the present government.

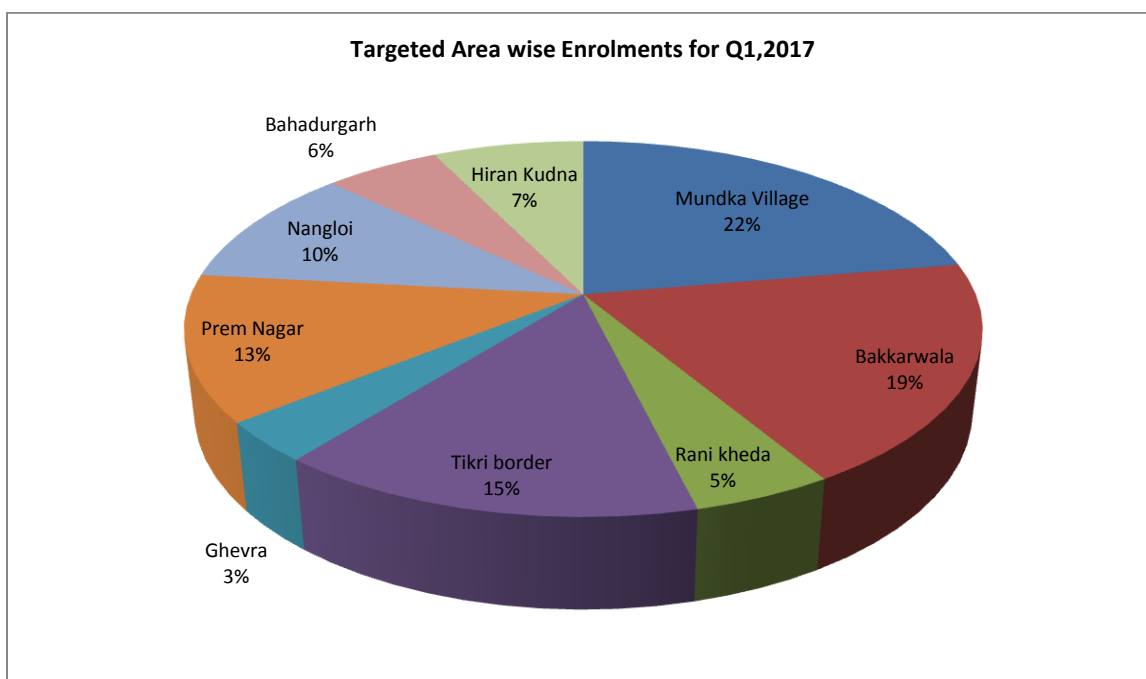
## Branches of Karmaarth

**Rohini:** It is the oldest branch which is located near Rithala village in Delhi. It was started in 2010 with 82 trainees and three courses. They started out-reach programs focusing on educating slum children who were picking rags, doing domestic work or working in local tea stalls, shops, etc. Regular non formal educational classes were arranged for such children in the age group of 6 to 14, promoting girl child education, equipping children with skills for a living through vocational courses.

**Mundka:** To spread further, their second branch was established in Mundka, Delhi in November 2011, which is now the Main branch. Currently, they are running 6 different courses (GDA, Dress designing, Beauty courses, Data entry, Mobile handset repairing, Customer care training) catering to fulfill requirements of different sectors of the industry. Various health care initiatives were taken for people residing in that area includes services to ensure ante-natal and post-natal pregnancy-related care, providing sex education to women, creating awareness about HIV/AIDS and care for common serious illnesses of young children.

**Bhiwani:** This branch was started in May 2012. They are running two courses there i.e. Cutting and Tailoring and Computer education for girls. Karmaarth conducts individual and group counseling for uneducated girls, unemployed youth, housewives/ladies with special needs and children not enrolled in schools are also being conducted in this branch.

The area wise enrolments have been shared at the end (Figure 2).



**FIGURE 2**  
**AREA-WISE ENROLMENTS FOR Q1, 2017**

### **NGO's Role in Development, Capacity Building and Self-Reliance of The Under-Privileged: A Review**

Professionally-staffed organizations aiming to make significant contributions towards human development with special focus on poor countries (Streeten, 1997). This is achieved through providing funds, delivering services and, capacity building, spreading awareness, and promoting the self-reliance (Baccaro, 2001). Primarily three functions of NGO's have been identified as:

1. Relief and welfare services.
2. Educational services.
3. Awareness on policy initiatives (Stromquist, 2002).

Bridger & Luloff (1999) mentioned that sustainable community development includes five dimensions. The first one focusing on increasing local economic diversity second is development of local markets, by encouraging local production, processing and imports. The third dimension involving reduction in the use of energy and recycling of waste products. The fourth dimension focuses on the protection and enhancement of biological diversity. The fifth dimension pertains to the commitment of the sustainable communities to social justice.

The efforts are directed towards building sustainable communities that harness the strengths of capacity building and self-reliance. NGOs are appreciated for promoting community programmes relying on participatory processes (Korten, 1990; Fowler, 1993; Salamon, 1994; Clark, 1999).

With over 80% of the workforce in India (rural and urban) without any identifiable and marketable skills; various skill development initiatives could make India the global hub for

skilled manpower (FICCI, 2010). There has been a lopsided growth specifically with reference to the gender. Women are expected to primarily devote their efforts to household chores and child rearing. Overlooking this section of the society can prove to be disastrous for the holistic development. Microfinance has been another area which needs attention in India. It has the potential to address poverty and deprivation of basic necessities by granting financial services (Sheraton, 2004).

Langran (2002) defined capacity building as the ability of one group (NGOs) to strengthen local communities through education, skill training and organizational support. Frankish (2003) gave dimensions for community capacity building which include-financial capacity (resources, opportunities and knowledge), human resources (skills, motivations, confidence, and relational abilities and trust) and social resources (networks, participation structures, shared trust and bonding).

Building self-reliant networks is another objective of NGOs. Self-reliant strategy relies on the willingness and ability of people of a community to rely on their own resources. It requires the optional use of all available human, natural and technological resources (Agere, 1982).

The organization in its mission incorporated all possible areas of growth and development that an NGO can undertake for uplifting the deprived section of the society. The following section describes in detail the project undertaken at Karmaarth.

### **Employability Project-“Mission Skilled Workforce”**

With a strong focus on holistic development, Karmaarth transforms the youth by inculcating skills, developing personalities and creating employment opportunities for them. The mission was started with a single aim; that people be skilled to become employable. The programmes at the Rohini Centre impart skills which cater to sectors like Retail, IT-ITES Telecom and Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI), Apparels & Home Furnishing Items, Health Care, Beauty & Wellness and Telecom (Tables 1 & Figure 3).

<b>Table 1</b>							
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DIFFERENT COURSES</b>							
<b>S. No</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Course Duration</b>	<b>Rohini Centre</b>	<b>Mundka Centre</b>	<b>Bhiwani Centre</b>	<b>Total Students Trained (June 2010-July 2016)</b>	
1	Certificate Course In Administrative Assistant	6 Months		100		100	
2	Certificate Course In Computer Learning	6 Months	1560	1200	750	3450	
3	Certificate Course In Tally & Accounting	3 Months	530	150		680	
4	Certificate Course in General Duty Assistant	3 Months		225		225	
5	Certificate Course in Handset Repairing	3 Months	1230	1250		2480	
6	Certificate Course in Sewing Machine Operator	6 Months	850	700	725	2275	
7	Certificate Course in Assistant Beautician	6 Months	1224	1030		2254	

<b>Table 1</b> <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DIFFERENT COURSES</b>						
8	Certificate Course in Dress Designing	6 Months	550	60		610
9	Certificate Course in Mehendi Designing & Art	3 Months	375	300		675
10	Certificate Course In Advance Spoken English and Personality Development	6 Months	290	500		790
11	Certificate course in computer Hardware & Networking	6 Months	1060	750		1810
12	Certificate course in Retail Management 3 Months		300			300

**1. Certificate programme in Sewing and Knitting**



*Training on tailoring at Karmaarth Rohini centre*

**2. Certificate programme in Beauty culture**



*Experts providing training on beauty skills*

**3. Certificate programme in Computer Basics**



**FIGURE 3**  
**GLIMPSES OF CERTIFICATE PROGRAM**

Students are provided training on soft skills and personality development to make them confident and market ready. Customized training is provided for placements in suitable industry.

**Project Innovation and Uniqueness**

**Infrastructure:** Dedicated building (10000 Sq. ft.) established to run the skill development projects which include classrooms for different courses, counseling rooms and fully equipped practical labs.

**Network:** Strong community network developed for effective mobilization of ideas and programs which got reflected in the growing number of admissions month on month.

**Online job portal:** To connect the incumbents with the recruiters a job portal is started. The portal helps in building Industry interface of students. Job seekers could register and connect with the potential recruiters offering diverse job profiles on this portal.

**Placement:** Karmaarth has a dedicated placement team led by the Centre head. The team invites recruiters for pre- placement sessions to inform about the company and guide the students about the skill sets required for specific job profiles (Table 2).

<b>Table 2</b>			
<b>COURSES AND RECRUITERS LIST</b>			
Course	Recruiters List	Recruiters List	Recruiters List
Self Employed Tailor	BLK Hospital	Amazon	Swarnim Makeovers Beauty Salon
Hand Embroidery	Max Hospital	Vodafone	Samsung Mobile
Sewing Machine Operator	Richa Global Export House	Satya Bhama Hospital	Vivo Mobile
Assistant Beautician	BATA ,CBSL Group	Ganpati Hospital	Genpact
Makeup Artist/Manicurist & Pedicurist	IKYA Recruitment Company	Sonial Cygnus Hospital	SB Insurance Brokers Private Limited
General Duty Assistant	Urban Clap	Big Bazar	VLCC Company
Data Entry Operator	Fun City Mall	Smart Step Private Limited	SBI Bank
In-Store Promoter	Portea Medical Care Services	ZOCTR Health Private Limited	Lakme
Mobile Repairing	Ziox Mobiles	World Line	Jaipur Golden Hospital
Front Office Associate	Study APT .COM	Jindal Telecom	Yantra Mobile Company
Sales Associate	Union Infosys	Vishal Mega Mart	City Cable
Customer Care Representative	Global Export BPO	Balaji Health Care	Reliance Jio

**Customized skill training:** The training imparted under the project is designed in line with the job requirements of the recruiters. The placement team takes regular suggestions from their knowledge partners regarding new courses which need to be introduced as per the requirements of different industries. The target beneficiaries for this project are deprived youth and marginalized women, belonging to poor economic background, therefore fee is not charged from the students. The female beneficiaries who receive skill training provide economic support to other family members.

**Financial inclusion:** Karmaarth promotes Micro Finance to their students to start their entrepreneurial venture and generate additional employment (including self-employment). For the spirited lot the organization provides financial support. Many beneficiaries of the project have successfully started their dream projects and some have also been motivated to scale up. 18 projects received a seed capital ranging between Rs. 25,000-50,000.

**National skill qualification framework (NSQF) aligned syllabus:** The course curriculum is designed as per NSQF guidelines, considering the National Occupational Standards stated for different job roles spanning different sectors.

**Performance assessment:** Regular internal and external assessments are conducted to monitor the progress of students and ensure their holistic development.

**Support for start-ups:** To encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship, skills are imparted to kindle new ventures. Interested candidates are given mentoring and provided full support to avail the micro-finance schemes.

**Career guidance centre:** Karmaarth developed a career guidance unit which provides one to one career guidance to the students and also offers a Help Line Number for those who could not come to the centre in person.

**Library facility:** This facility is equipped with books related to various skill sectors. New books are also ordered on the recommendation of the students and potential recruiters.

### The Operations

In order to ensure effective implementation of the project a CSR advisory Board was formed comprising 7 members, headed by the Chairman. The board laid down the objectives keeping in mind the rounded development of the target beneficiaries. Various divisions were formed for seamless functioning, reviewing the overall progress and development of projects (Figure 4).



**FIGURE 4**  
**DIVISIONS OF THE EMPLOYABILITY PROJECT**



The process was supplemented with a meticulous check and assessment process to carry out the equation between resource contribution and results achieved. The organization followed several techniques to monitor and record the functioning of the project:

1. Monthly visits by external Quality Check Team.
2. Weekly and Monthly Progress reports.
3. Regular tests and assignments during the training period.
4. Performance evaluation of the Trainers and the Trainees.
5. Alignment of the progress with the implementation plan and revise accordingly.
6. Placement Record maintenance.
7. Drop-out Rate and Retention Rate.
8. Recruiter Feedback and level of satisfaction.
9. Trainees Feedback and level of satisfaction.
10. Training Cost divided by total number of beneficiaries trained annually.

### Impact Assessment

The project brought transformation in the lives of many and helped to realize the dreams of the lot which was struggling for one square meal a day. Skill project enabled the deprived, suppressed women to fight for their rights. It brought increased awareness among the people that skill development is instrumental in increasing economic and social welfare (Table 3). More than 17000 youngsters and women from economically deprived and socially marginalized background were trained till August, 2017. More than 68% got placement from Karmaarth, fetching an average salary of Rs. 7500 per month. 580 trained beneficiaries have set up their own business and become entrepreneur. The organization has an online job portal for creating a bridge between the recruiters and the job seekers. 3557 Jobseekers have registered on Karmaarth online job Portal till second quarter of 2017.

**Table 3**  
**TESTIMONIALS**

Student name	Course details	Testimonial
Barkha Sharma	Customer Care Executive (Relationship Management), 2017	<i>"I am glad I got myself enrolled with Karmaarth. I learnt Customer handling skills, English and IT Skills in my course; because of which now I am working with NSSO as Administration Officer earning INR 19,000 pm. I am very happy that now I am supporting my family and at the same time sponsoring my further education."</i>
Anju	Office Administration, 2016	<i>"I feel very proud when I see myself financially independent. I did my Office Administration course from Karmaarth, which not only helped me learn the technical skills but also gave me a new confidence. Currently I am working with Karmaarth Foundation as Admin Assistant earning INR 10,000 pm".</i>
Hemant	Customer Care Executive (Relationship Management), 2017	<i>"I've done my CCE course from Karmaarth, because of which I've enhanced my communication skills and confidence level. Now I feel very confident speaking to people in Public and this is helping me to perform better at my workplace. I am working with Delhi Airport Transit Mail Office, earning INR 25,000 pm as Staff".</i>

**Table 3**  
**TESTIMONIALS**

Meera	General Duty Assistant, 2015	<i>"I have done my GDA course from Karmaarth, which has guided me to work as a GDA in Max Hospital earning INR 15,000 pm.. I am very happy that now I am independent and supporting my family financially."</i>
Deepak Sakya	Mobile Repairing , 2017	<i>"I have completed my Mobile Repairing course from Karmaarth. This course has helped me a lot in terms of increasing my technical skills as well as enhancing my professional skills. All the faculties are supportive here. Currently, I am working with Yantra as a Hardware Engineer earning INR 25,000 pm."</i>
Rekha	Dress Designing, 2017	<i>"Karmaarth has given me a new life. I have gained confidence in my technical skills as a Dress Designer as well as an individual. With gained confidence, I am currently placed in MCD as a self-defense staff earning INR 22,000 pm. I am so proud that now I am supporting my family and is self-reliant."</i>
Nisha	Dress Designing, 2017	<i>"I am an entrepreneur running my own tailoring and training center, earning around INR 8,000 pm. With all the skills learnt from Karmaarth, I am now passing the same skills to other student in my centre. I am thankful to Karmaarth for giving me a new vision a new life."</i>
Seema	Assistant Beautician , 2017	<i>"I have done my Assistant Beautician course from Karmaarth. This course has not only skilled me in beautician field but also helped me to be a confident professional. My dream came true that today I am working as a Beautician Instructor with PMKVY project earning INR 10,000 pm."</i>

### Decision Alternatives for Expansion and Sustenance

Despite the vigor and passion, Karmaarth had to face several hurdles. Karmaarth aimed to reach at least 40000 people by the year 2017 but was able to reach an enrolment figure of less than half its target. In hindsight it was found that the teething troubles like developing trust and confidence among people and motivating them to join hands took the maximum time. It was hard to convince those who were already employed in petty jobs since that gave them a living. They were unwilling to give up their jobs due to insecurity.

In order to resolve the broader issues first and make their presence felt, the team first convinced the community leaders and counseled the people individually as well in groups. Though enrolling females, despite being a priority remains to be a challenge till date. The reasons were many including- prejudices in the patriarchal structure, domestic responsibilities, illiteracy leading to ignorance and sheer unwillingness. Mundka and Bhiwani the two geographies where project was initiated were predominantly male dominated areas. Problems like crime against women, early marriage and domestic violence were pervasive in these areas.

The Chairman and his team felt confident with the resounding success of the program. At the same time recognized the need to reach a larger set of people. The team in their program appraisal meetings jotted down the issues that needed a new action plan for the coming years:

- Increasing the enrolment ratio across genders for different courses.
- Ensuring a higher percentage of employability.
- Aligning the working of the program with the latest government initiatives on skill development and ensuring maximum benefits.

- Creating an increased impact with new courses and schemes.
- Seeking support from Industry and Recruiters to impart skill training by sharing resources and industry experience.

The skill committee, research division, training division, placement division and the quality committee were instructed to delve deep into the issues enumerated. Each committee was asked to prepare a report citing their plans for the next five years. The proposed action plans of all the committees were collated and the following findings were made for future course of action.

Apart from the existing profile, it was proposed that an online platform for Students, Trainers, Training Providers, Government Skill Scheme and Recruiters by the name of “*Skill Connect*” be launched. The aim of this platform will be to register 40 Lakh skill aspirants in the next five years. The target was set in line with the Ministry of skill development’s goal to train 400 million people by 2022. The first phase of the plan will include registering the trained candidates of various beneficiary schemes run by government like PMKVY, DDUGKY, Aajeevika Scheme on the portal. More than 5000 training centres across states (Private skilling Companies like ILFS, Centum Learning , Orion Edutech Private Limited CSRs-Skill Initiatives of private companies and colleges along with the certified trainers be registered on the portal. It was proposed that 3000 potential recruiters and 1000 consultancy firms will be registered on the portal with the help of cold calling, sending proposals and visiting them.

Another portal to be created for giving an opportunity to various NGO’s and SHG’s who seek a market to sell their products. The portal christened “*India Craft Mart*” will create a wider reach for their products without the involvement of intermediaries. ICM will also provide necessary skills to deprived/less privileged children, women and men in NGOs for them to become able sellers on the portal. Initially, the portal will carry clothes, decorative items and herbal products. NGOs identified for partnership include-Sahyogita Samaj Vikas Sansthan, Sunder Amarsheel Charitable Trust, Sant Ravidas, SPID, Tamanna, Dhyan Foundation, Chetnalaya, Love Care Foundation, Door of Hope, Guild of Service, Sparsh, Shan India.

Another view was to create a social enterprise with the target of making a sustainable business model. The courses will be run with a nominal fee structure which will be borne by the candidate. The amount will be spent on enrolling the candidates into government recognized courses, making applications for availing the schemes of government etc. This step will also ensure sincerity and commitment from the candidate’s end.

The enterprise will focus on combining technology with people and help people find out, apply for Government schemes. The ultimate aim will be to aid people benefit from Government schemes which are often ambiguous, tough to get access to, and much beyond the reach of those who need it.

## CONCLUSION

As a part of the Skill India campaign, such initiatives play an instrumental role in supporting the social and economic programs of the government. Assessing the risk and return of available opportunities, it remains to be seen whether Karmarth’s endeavors would be able to capitalize on the mushrooming opportunities in India and create sustainable livelihood for a larger set with an overall contribution to the economy.

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