

# THINK LABOR

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## Learning, Labour, and Life Skills

*Shaping Salon Professionals: Inside Pratham's Chembur Training Centre*

The Pratham Beauty Training Centre, Chembur is a clear example of how structured skill development can translate into real, visible change. The structure is clear, the expectations are set, and yet the space does not feel rigid, it's a flexible, supportive cohort, with room for people to find their footing in life. What stood out to me was that the focus isn't just on teaching a skill, it's on helping trainees see themselves differently, with more confidence and clearer aspirations.

Each day starts with small, consistent practices, introductions, reading, group interactions. On paper, these might seem basic, but sitting through them, I could see why they matter. In the beginning, some trainees speak softly or hesitate, but over time that changes. They start speaking more clearly, a little more confidently each day. Their growth can literally be seen, as they build their abilities and confidence simultaneously. Communication is built into the routine so naturally that it becomes part of who they are, not just something they're taught.

One thing that really sets this training apart is how client interaction is part of everyday learning. Trainees aren't just told what to do; they're shown how to speak, how to understand a client's needs, how to handle situations that may not go smoothly, and communicate effectively with anyone they may encounter. These sessions feel practical because they mirror what actually happens in real settings. Over time, you can see trainees becoming more comfortable with the human side of their soon to be profession as well.

The technical training itself is very hands-on. Concepts are explained, demonstrated, and then practiced repeatedly. There's no rush to move ahead before something is understood properly. Trainers guide closely, giving feedback throughout. I noticed that this approach helps trainees become more precise and assured of what they're doing. The focus is clearly on getting it right, not just getting it done with. The trainees are taught various technical beauty skills, from manicures-pedicures to hair styling and makeup, they achieve perfection in every skill they learn.



Another interesting aspect is how much trainees learn from each other, working in pairs, they observe, correct, and support one another. This creates a sense of camaraderie, shared progress, and mutual growth, alongside creating and nurturing relations that will help them both, personally and professionally. No one is left behind,

feedback flows easily, paired with easy smiles and helping hands. The environment feels comfortable enough for the trainees to try, make mistakes, and improve without any trepidation.

The program also goes beyond vocational skills in a very practical way. Sessions on financial literacy, entrepreneurship, communication, nutrition, and mental-physical well-being are all part of the curriculum. These components address essential aspects of daily life that influence long-term stability and independence. By equipping trainees with this broader knowledge base, the program ensures that they are better prepared to manage both, personal and professional responsibilities.



As the training continues, the change in trainees becomes noticeable. They begin to speak with more clarity, participate more actively, and take more ownership of their learning. There's also a strong sense of community within the centre. Trainees support each other, encourage each other, and grow together. That shared environment makes a difference; it builds both confidence and resilience.

The Pratham vocational training model is well thought through in how it brings everything together. Technical skills, communication, real-world exposure, and personal development are all connected. What makes it effective is its consistency, the process is clear, the support is steady, and the progress is visible. It creates a pathway where trainees are not just learning a skill, but building the confidence to use it.

What also stays with you is the sense of dignity the space builds. The trainees are not treated as passive recipients of training, but as individuals capable of growth and decision-making. There is a quiet shift in how they begin to carry themselves, more assured, aware, and present. It reflects in small things: the way they speak, the way they interact, even the way they approach their workstations. Although not dramatic changes, they reflect the changes within them, taking control of their bright futures ahead.

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