Ghar Jaisa

India's Gujarat is a land of many worlds woven together—of vibrant cities and quiet villages, of industry and enterprise, of traditions that have travelled through generations. From the salt plains of Kutch to the bustling streets of Ahmedabad and the industrial corridors of Surat and Vadodara, the state reflects both diversity and aspiration. Yet, behind its economic growth lies an important question: how do we ensure that young people, especially those from underserved communities, have the skills, confidence, and opportunities to participate in this growth?

For many young people, skilling is only the beginning of their journey. Employment opportunities are often concentrated in cities and industrial hubs, requiring youth to move beyond the familiarity of their homes and communities. Migration, therefore, becomes an important bridge between skills and employment.

But migrating to a new city is not simply about travelling from one place to another. It means understanding a new culture, navigating unfamiliar streets, managing expenses, finding accommodation, building relationships, and learning to live independently.

For a young person stepping out of their village or hometown for the first time, a city can be both a place of opportunity and a place of uncertainty.



Recognising this transition, Pratham, with the support of Accenture, has established the **NEXT (Navigating Employment and eXploring Transitions) Career Centres**—spaces designed to help young people take their first steps towards a more secure future. Four such centres have been established in Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad, providing young people with a temporary place to stay and giving them time to become familiar with the culture, geography, transportation, employment ecosystem, and everyday realities of a new city.

The NEXT Career Centre in Ahmedabad is one such example—a space where young people arriving from different parts of the country can find a sense of home while being away from home. Here, they are not simply preparing for a job; they are preparing themselves for life in a new city.

These centres serve as a bridge between home and independence. They provide young people with the foundational support needed to navigate cities confidently, adapt to new environments, and gradually build lives of their own.

What began as an effort to support migration for employment has evolved into something much larger. The NEXT Career Centre demonstrate that successful skilling is not only about preparing a young person for a job—it is also about preparing them for the journey that comes with it.



We met a group of 11 students who had completed the General Duty Assistant (GDA) training at Pratham's Raipur Centre and travelled to Ahmedabad for job interviews. For many of them, it was their first time visiting a city like Ahmedabad. The journey was a new experience, filled with excitement, nervousness and the hope of finding a job. They arrived with limited understanding of the city—how to travel from one place to another, where they could stay, how to approach employers, or simply how to find their feet in an unfamiliar environment.

The centre and its staff helped the students understand local transportation, navigate placement opportunities, explore accommodation options, and gradually become familiar with the city. Whenever the unfamiliarity of a new place became overwhelming, there was someone they could approach for guidance.

But perhaps the most important thing the centre offered could not be measured in kilometres travelled or interviews attended—it offered a sense of belonging.

For Naren and me, this idea was a significant milestone; for creating spaces where migration becomes less intimidating, cities become more accessible, and young people can take their first steps towards a secure future with confidence.

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