



Good Business, Doing Good

Stories of change from the Women in Factories program, India



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The Women in Factories Program is made possible through funding from the Walmart Foundation. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation launched the factory training program to provide training to 60,000 women in 150 factories in India, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Honduras and China by the end of 2016. The Women in Factories Program is part of the larger Walmart Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Initiative which aims to train nearly one million women, increase sourcing from women, and in doing so improve the lives of underserved women around the world.



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Women in Factories program, India

Shama Karkal, Meera Devi

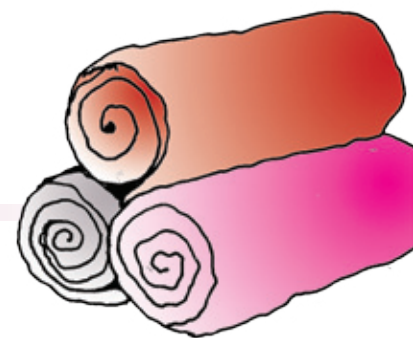
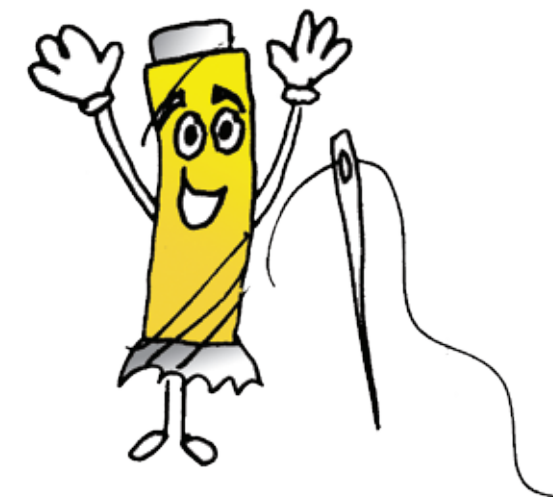


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Preface

Having worked with the women, in factories, over three years, we have had the opportunity to be part of their journey and watch their transformation. The process of collecting and telling their stories has been another learning experience for us. It gave us an opportunity to see the ripple effect as a result of the application of the skills. The strength of the women has been truly inspiring; not only did they overcome their own challenges, but have been willing to take on new ones – gender discrimination, violence etc. – within their families or communities.

There are many people who worked to bring this publication together. Our gratitude is due to the management and staff of the fifteen factories who provided their support and cooperation for implementation of the Program as well as collection of the stories. The WiF has been possible only because of the team that has worked on it over the past three years. Special thanks to Usha Rani, Programme Manager - Karnataka, Meera Devi, Programme Manager - Tamil Nadu, Ashok Vittal and Shankar A. G., Managers - Training and Development, for their commendable support and coordination. Our gratitude to all the Capacity Building Officers - S. Thangakani, K. Padmavathi, Sukanya R., Sushma B. S., Sathish K. N., Arvind Kumar, Hiral Parmar, Arpita Dave, Priyanka R. S., Sandya G. S., and Ranjita P, who interviewed the women and documented their stories.

This final publication would not have seen the light of day had it not been for Yashika Sukhramani, Sanjana Shelar and Sweta Das who helped with analyzing and editing of all the stories.

Finally, our gratitude to the women themselves. We hope that this collection of stories provides others an opportunity to understand and become part of the journey of change, for women in factories.

Shama Karkal
Meera Devi

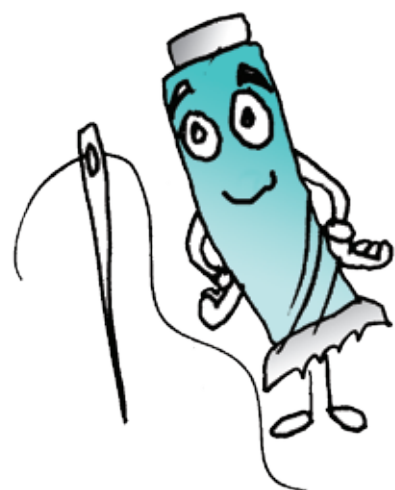


Introduction

With approximately 25 percent of the population living in poverty, limited participation of women in the workforce (rates ranging from 14 percent in urban to 26 per cent in rural areas) and only eight percent of the micro, small and medium-enterprises being owned by women (ICRW 2012), there is significant potential in India for increasing women's economic participation and their contribution to equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

Social factors play a significant role in reducing women's labor participation in India. In many parts of the country, restrictions are imposed on the mobility of women outside the household, thus limiting their opportunities. The other factors that prevent female labor participation in India, include the lack of education and skills, absence of suitable employment opportunities and male-female wage disparities.

Gender discrimination is a critical factor that has been detrimental to the development of women across India. It has not only negatively influenced the growth of women, but has excluded their productive contribution in national development. Patriarchal values and power structures have put women in a subordinate position and thus limited their participation in the decision making process, within their homes and outside. Gender roles and responsibilities not only decide power relations but also leave women with no access to resources and no authority to make decisions that influence their own lives.



Given this context, the Women In Factories program, which is being implemented in India by Swasti as part of the Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative (GWEEI) of Walmart Foundation, aims to empower women workers in the manufacturing sector, to attain their full potential and enhance their capacities. It does this by providing relevant life skills, building positive attitudes and practices, that contribute towards the holistic development of an individual, resulting in improved performance and facilitating career growth. This global initiative was designed to address women workers' needs in the supply chain of the production sector and is being implemented simultaneously in Bangladesh, Latin America (Honduras, El Salvador) and China.

The Women in Factories (WiF) Program

The Women in Factories program aims to help the women achieve:

- Improved knowledge on life skills (communication, health, negotiation skills, etc.) and improved ability to implement it
- Improved social and economic standards
- Improved ability to convert opportunities into actions

Phase I of the program in India has been implemented in 15 factories across the three states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, between November 2011 and November 2014. The key components of the Women in Factories (WiF) program developed and implemented by Swasti are: Enablers Orientation, Foundational Training, Advanced Training and Training of Trainers (ToT). The Foundational Training is conducted for all men and women workers in the factory for a duration of 15 hours, covering basic topics like communication, managing work and career, gender, health and workers role in the supply chain.

The Advanced Training covers 130 women in each factory in two cohorts (65 in each cohort). The first cohort is trained exclusively by the Swasti team. The respective factory teams train the second cohort, after they are adequately trained under the Training of Trainers program. Participants of the Advanced Training are selected on the basis of predefined selection criteria. The Advanced Training is an 100 hours module that covers five major themes – Health, Communication,

Financial and Functional Literacy, Gender and Leadership.

The Training of Trainers is designed to sustain the 'Women in Factories' program and its outcomes, beyond the funding period, and to facilitate the scale up and replication of the model in other units of the factories. For the Training of Trainers' sessions, two or three people are selected from each factory. The Training of Trainers' session is organized for a duration of 17 days spread across 7 months.

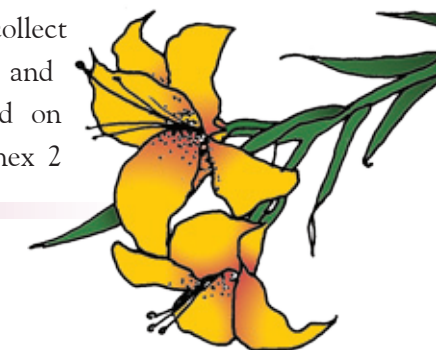
One of the key systems that have been put in place to ensure ownership of the Program, is the establishment of the Collaborative Planning and Implementation Team (CPIT). CPITs have been set up in all factories within the WiF program, to plan and review the intervention on a periodic basis.

About this collection

Women, their families, colleagues and supervisors have reported changes - big and small - during the course of the Program. This collection is an attempt to document the changes that the "Women in Factories" program contributed to, at personal and professional levels.

Only factories covered in Phase 1 of the program have been included for documentation. (Annex 1 - List of Factories). Women who had completed both the Foundational and Advanced Training from all three regions – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat – were selected and interviewed in October and November 2014.

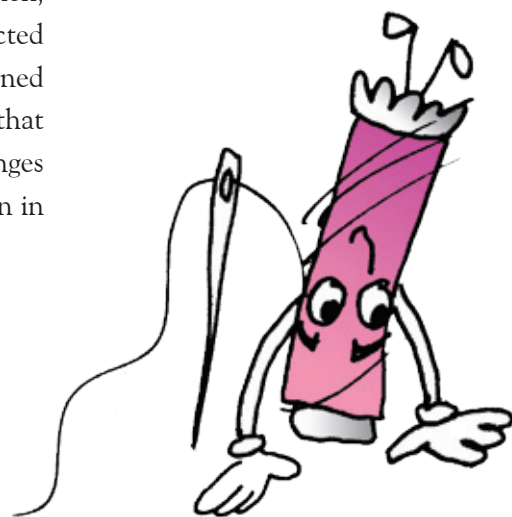
A tool was developed to collect to interview the women and develop case studies based on the study framework. (Annex 2



- Tool for data collection and Annexure 3 - Case study framework). Swasti's Capacity Building Officers (CBOs), who are part of the program implementation, interviewed the women over a two week period and collected information. The interviews collected from the women were analyzed across the different parameters listed in the study framework. Based on the information collected from the women, key changes were identified and categorized into either personal or professional.

While most women reported changes in both, each story has only been placed in one section based on where the most significant change was reported. Though the study framework looked at change at the factory management level, these were not collected systematically and have not been included in this document. This is an area that we hope to address in another document, at a later stage of the program.

The collection of stories is in two sections - Personal and Family level changes and Professional changes. Each section begins with a summary, followed by individual stories of women. Names of women, their colleagues and family members have been retained as collected; consent for the same has been obtained from the women and the factories. While personal information about the women, their families and circumstances were collected and used for analysis, these have not been retained unless specifically relevant to the changes that are described. The focus is on narrating changes subsequent to their participation in the Women in Factories program.



Personal and Family level changes



Section 1

Personal and Family level changes

There are many theories on what factors contribute to individual behavioral changes. Attitude, intent and motivation, knowledge, skill and the environment are common elements of these theories and attempting behavioral change often requires addressing all of these elements. Often knowledge and skill can be increased, but improving attitude or motivation is easier said than done.

Women we spoke with, reported a range of changes - improved self-esteem and confidence, assertiveness, improved communication, enhanced knowledge etc. These are significant not only because change is not easy, but because of the circumstances that these women come from. A majority of the women reported difficult circumstances either during their childhood or in their marriage - inability to pursue their studies due to financial constraints, mental and/or physical abuse at the hands of an alcoholic father or husband etc. Financial insecurity and the double burden of work at home and factory, were often a reason for stress and anxiety. Women recalled being bitter, ill tempered, abusive, and unable to handle their anger. This was expressed at work - fights with the supervisors and difficulties with colleagues were not uncommon.

The WiF program helped to build up their confidence over a period of time, helping

them understand their skills, options, rights and barriers to their goals. Opportunities within the program allowed them to express their thoughts and opinions. The women were not mere spectators but active participants.

Women reported significant change in their outlook. Moving from being indifferent, feeling overburdened or frustrated to sharing responsibilities at home and taking interest in family activities is a common thread across the different stories. Communication techniques were put into practice and women reported becoming more assertive and being able to negotiate their way, both at home and work. Women with disabilities were able to use communication techniques to overcome some of the challenges they were facing and progress professionally. For some, the renewed strength and confidence they derived from the program also helped them to live independently and face unexpected challenges of life. In some cases, better stress management in turn helped to mend family relationships. Many reported that heated arguments had reduced and there was increased tolerance with family members and colleagues.

Improved knowledge on health and hygiene has allowed women to make significant changes in their habits and health-seeking behavior. Information on women's health such as pregnancy, childbirth, family planning methods, child development, sexual health,

etc. was also shared with family members and neighbors.

Financial constraints along with the lack of knowledge and skills on financial management were a common challenge. Increased knowledge on financial planning, budgeting, savings and investments along with a change in habits has not only allowed them spending flexibility but also provided them means to fulfill their goals. Women reported increased savings and diversification of instruments for saving and investment.

Finally and most significantly, women reported being able to change power-equations at home and participate in decision-making. With a refreshed and pragmatic understanding of gender issues, women reported feeling more content and satisfied with their lives.



Catalyzing change

Mala recalls being stressed constantly - at work and at home. She lacked the confidence to speak to her co-workers and supervisors, and at the same time became easily irritated with them. She was even scared to pick up her monthly salary. Her lack of confidence was compounded by her lack of knowledge. She did not know the factory's rules and regulations and was reprimanded for not following them.

All this combined, left her unmotivated. Her day at the factory was tense and she brought that tension home, quarreling with her husband, children and mother-in-law. Her home life was not stress-free as she did not communicate well with her husband and took all the household chores upon herself. As a result, she often carried the tension from home into the workplace.

Mala says WiF program helped her change her life - by teaching her how to communicate, manage stress, and monitor health and nutrition better. She has started to take care of her family's health by making sure they eat nutritious food, drink clean water, and keep their house clean. Mala now prepares different varieties of nutritious foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, which her children love and have complimented her for. She also bought a water filter because, *"The training made me realize the importance of clean water. Now I make sure everyone drinks only filtered water."* Her husband and children appreciate her efforts in keeping them healthy.

Mala reports that her relationship with her husband has improved. Mala's husband has begun to change his style of communication as he has seen Mala changing her own. He has observed Mala sharing her learning with others, and how that has brought people close to her. He observes how they come and share their problems with Mala and how she tries to give suggestions. He has also observed how she speaks confidently at the factory and at home. The changes in Mala's demeanor have prompted him to change his own. He listens more to Mala, and the two of them have now discussions about their children's future. Mala has spoken to him at length about gender equality that she learned in the trainings. She wants to make sure that both her daughters and her son are well educated and get the same opportunities - an opportunity she had sacrificed so her brothers could study.

Mala and her husband now prepare the budget together using the financial skills she has learned, and are planning how to save for their children's education. They plan to invest in an education policy, which Mala learned about through the training. Mala's husband has also started to help her in some of the household chores.

Mala has gained the respect of her friends and acquaintances because she shares her recently acquired knowledge about health and nutrition, especially about women's health including pregnancy and family planning, with her neighbors. Recently, one of her friends had a problem related to family planning, and Mala was the one who suggested that she consult a doctor. Mala

helped her find a solution to the problem. Mala's neighbors know that they can come to her for accurate knowledge about basic women's health issues. They appreciate her knowledge on issues such as how to maintain hygiene during menstruation, which is one of the many things Mala has learned through the training. The respect of her neighbors has given Mala greater self-confidence. "Now I lead my local SHG," says Mala. "I share my learning with the group members. They see and appreciate the changes in me. I feel happy and fearless."

At the base of her improved work, family, and community life, is Mala's ability to take care of herself. The training has given her the desire, skills and self-confidence to take better care of her physical and emotional health. Mala says that she no longer skips breakfast, takes care to eat nutritious food and drink clean water, all of which have made her stronger, better able to take care of her family and work more at the factory.



A wave of optimism

"I was left with no hope for my life- only despair, and used to think that I would never achieve anything in my life", remembers Saroja. This feeling permeated everything she did. Saroja was often absent from work, completed tasks for the sake of completing them - whether it was instructions from her supervisor or eating her food. Saroja confesses that she had no interest in anything and did not use safety tools at her factory before attending the life-skills training sessions.

Today, Saroja has transformed into a confident and responsible individual, who helps her mother with household chores and gives due respect to elders in the family and her neighborhood.

"I was addicted to alcohol and drugs since quite some time, but through her counseling, I have given up these life threatening habits", says Saroja's father. Saroja's father today motivates his many friends to give up alcohol addiction. Saroja's father appreciates his daughter publicly, motivating her. Saroja also helped her mother to recover from similar feelings of despair and hopelessness. She spends time with her parents and talks to them about the positive aspects of life in general, asks about her parents' daily routines, their problems and tries to resolve them. They have also started having healthy discussions on social issues and daily events happening in the country. Saroja has managed to get her father help with household chores.

Saroja today plans every meal and ensures that her mother cooks a balanced diet, taking on the task of shopping for vegetables every alternate day. *"I have shifted to using sanitary napkins after learning about the life threatening infections that one can get from using cloth that is not cleaned well. I motivate women and young girls in my neighborhood to use sanitary napkins; spending some money today is better than fighting deadly diseases later",* says Saroja.

Saroja has understood that women can have their own desires in life and an ideal life partner should support and motivate his wife to fulfill those desires. She says, *"I would like to join politics if possible and would like to work on issues of domestic violence."*

Saroja now keeps a proper track of her income and expenditure and regularly saves Rs. 1000 in a bank account. She regularly prays in order to deal with her anxiety and stress, and feels that helping others helps her in turn as well. She enjoys the process where family members collectively make a budget and ensure that it is implemented. *"I would like to share the learning's of the life-skills program in schools and public domains",* concludes Saroja.



Moving on

Bhagyalakshmi's troubled childhood and marriage had left her as a frustrated and aggressive individual, at home and work. She says, "I was a very self-centered individual, who didn't care about my mother's health and didn't help her with household chores. I even beat my children to vent my stress and frustration." Bhagyalakshmi expressed her frustration by not eating her meals and sleeping empty stomach quite often. "I had become angry with the entire world for the atrocities that were inflicted on me by my husband and was trying to take revenge every day in search of peace", says Bhagyalakshmi.

Bhagyalakshmi's entire worldview changed after attending the foundational and advanced training course. She is more optimistic now and believes in facing her challenges rather than letting the challenges erode her strength and confidence. She

has become very sensitive in choosing her words while interacting with others. "I used to use abusive language with people, when I was irritated which was quite often, but after understanding different communication styles and its impact, I ensure that I use polite words that do not hurt anybody", says Bhagyalakshmi.

She recognizes her mother's old age issues and provides her psychological support apart from helping her in household chores. Bhagyalakshmi feels very grateful for the knowledge on nutrition; her children often had dysentery but now she knows how to prevent and manage it. She now cuts her and her children's nails regularly and drinks only boiled water. She ensures that her bathroom is always clean and dry. She also ensures her family eats vegetables and fruits, and has added millets to their meals.

Bhagyalakshmi has begun to share her knowledge on nutrition, importance of rest,

etc. with women and girls in her neighborhood. She feels that such constructive dialogues have also enhanced her social circle and respect in the neighborhood.

"My daughter was earlier scared to venture out with her children alone, but now, after the training,



Finding her voice

Netravati was always very quiet and would cry if someone spoke loudly or angrily. She would get angry easily, but was afraid to say anything. She would not mingle with others and never participated in festivals or functions – at home or work. Her family was exasperated with her and Netravati reports being scared of interacting with others and not knowing how to control her emotions.

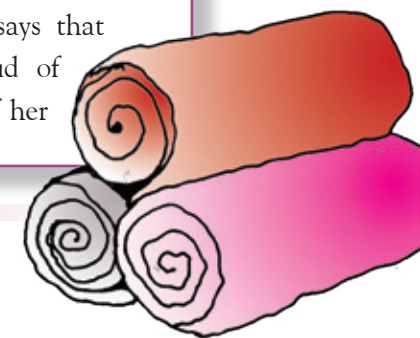
Her personality has changed completely after the two levels of the WiF program. She now talks with her team members and has friends at her factory; she is not afraid to talk even with her supervisors now.

Netravati reports that her confidence stems from the training program, specifically the graduation ceremony held at the end of the training. She was chosen to be the master of ceremonies, and no one, not even Netravati thought that she would do a good job. However, she says, the trainers encouraged her, and the things she had learned helped her to speak confidently. All of her co-workers were astonished to see Netravati, who had always been so quiet and easily scared, up on stage, anchoring the entire ceremony. Netravati says that the experience made her believe in herself. "I am proud of myself. I was appreciated for organizing the graduation ceremony of the Women in Factories program, especially by the higher management, and they have informed me that they will approach me to organize such events in the future." She says that her husband, too, is proud of her, and shares the story of her

she takes her children for shopping and to the fair", reports Bhagyalakshmi's mother. Bhagyalakshmi has used her new knowledge and confidence to seek a share in her husband's property – she has filed a case in court in order to protect the interests of her two children.

Bhagyalakshmi changed the school her children were studying in, from a private to a government one, and has successfully reduced her household expenditure. She now invests the saving for her children's higher education, has a bank account and uses even an ATM machine. "I earlier used to spend money on many unnecessary things but now I spend with a future plan and vision which has helped me save money." Bhagyalakshmi has also started a petty jewelry business in order to supplement her income, which she thinks has enhanced her marketing skills.

Bhagyalakshmi is now comfortable sharing her everyday struggles with her children, which has brought them closer. They help relieve her stress by dancing and singing with her. "I now have a rapport with my children and take good care of them. I see love and concern in their eyes and deeds. Earlier they were scared of me, but now they respect me and support me in small ways such as cleaning vessels and accompanying me to the market. Overall a peaceful environment prevails at home now. I feel confident and know that as a human being with equal rights, I do not need to kneel down to anybody", wraps up Bhagyalakshmi.



success with all their relatives and friends. Netravati has discovered that she likes anchoring programs a lot, and is considering taking up a part-time anchor's job on a local news channel to further her interest. She says that the job interests her also because the training has given her the awareness to critique what she watches on TV, and not blindly accept what is being shared on TV.

Netravati is assertive with her children and husband. She takes a greater interest in her children's studies and makes sure that they are studying as they should. She has also been able to convince her husband to control his anger. *"He used to get angry and shout at me and others but since the time I advised him that by shouting nothing would work out, only his health would get spoilt, he has reduced shouting and controls his anger better"*, she says. Netravati now has the courage to stand up even to her mother-in-law.

At home, Netravati has put into practice the knowledge she has gained on health and financial literacy. She now goes for a walk every day, eats more nutritious food and prepares a variety of dishes for her spouse and children. She has talked to her daughters about menstruation and reproductive health issues, as much as they can understand at their age. With her husband, she has started to plan for their daughters' future education. She says that they are both much more cautious with their money now. *"We have bought a new book to maintain accounts. Expense of even a single rupee is recorded, so that we can track our expenses. This way, we can maintain a better relationship with my husband's family as well"*, reports Netravati. She and her

husband now discuss all expenses and budget together, so that they never have to face their earlier difficulties.

Netravati has gained the confidence and the knowledge to ask for a more equal relationship with her husband. He now shares the household work with her and consults her in all major decisions. Her husband says, *"Netravati is more confident now and is capable of solving her own and others' problems."* She has made sure to teach, not just her daughters but also all the girls in her neighbourhood about sexual harassment and about "good touch" and "bad touch". She also proactively went to her daughters' school and asked the teacher to allow her to conduct a session for the girls on "good touch" and "bad touch". Netravati says that the training has made her determined to support the women in her neighborhood. When she noticed that her landlady faced a lot of violence at the hands of her drunkard husband, she went to her home, consoled her, and advised her to take her husband to a de-addiction center. She also helped a widowed woman in her neighborhood whose in-laws were trying to drive her out of her house. The woman had two young children and was very scared. Netravati brought the incident to the attention of the Swasti team, who is working to find a legal solution to the woman's problem.

Netravati says that her perception of herself and what she can do has changed. She feels more confident and focused, and enjoys her work and home life more. Netravati's greatest joy is in teaching her daughters all that she has learned as she wants them to have a bright future.

Angry no more

Nagaveni was easily angered. She could not stand to be corrected by her supervisors at work and quarreled constantly with her husband at home. When she was angry, she could not control herself – being rude to her supervisors, shouting at her husband or beating her children.

Nagaveni has managed to transform herself. She now stops herself from reacting instinctively and controls her anger. She uses the simple techniques taught to her in the training, such as drinking a glass of water, or keeping quiet when someone is shouting at her.

Nagaveni has also learned how to communicate better with others around her. She speaks much more kindly to her family, which has been noticed, leading her brother to say, *"Thank god you have changed your style of talking. Now you handle situations well!."* While she previously stayed away from her neighbors, she now shares her knowledge about health and other matters, and listens to them when they come to her with their problems. As a result, many of her neighbors come to her for advice.

Nagaveni recalls eating out with her children regularly. This has now changed, with Nagaveni cooking the majority of her family's meals at home and ensuring that she and her children drink two glasses of milk a day. She has also started to go to the doctor when someone is ill, rather than approaching the local chemist's shop directly without a prescription.

Nagaveni is also taking care of her financial health. While she previously left it all to her husband, she now sits down with him to plan the budget every month. She says that this is one of the things that have drawn her and her husband together. Nagaveni feels that she has become more responsible with her money these days, cutting down on unnecessary expenses such as junk food and fancy clothes. She used to buy expensive saris without considering if she could afford them, when she went shopping with her mother. She no longer does that, choosing cheaper clothes in order to fit into the budget she has. Nagaveni's reduction in spending has not, however, made her a complete home buddy. She still loves to go out, and makes sure that her husband and children do too. She persuades them to go out of the house on sundays, something that makes her happy and manage stress.

Not only has she managed to share household chores with her husband and children, she also remembered the "Bell Bajao" campaign to help her neighbor. When she heard her neighbor abusing his wife, she sent her son to knock on the door to ask for help with mathematics homework! This stopped the abuse at that time.



A new chapter

Manjula believes that the Women in Factories (WiF) program helped her discover her inner strength and to realize the importance of life.

Manjula was able to confide her emotional trauma with the WiF trainer and felt much lighter after sharing. She realized the importance of communication and that bottling up her feelings was only aggravating her problems.

Manjula is using her new communication skills to rebuild her relationships with her husband and her mother-in-law. She believes they have developed an understanding between themselves that has led to a better marriage. She has learned to keep her composure when her mother-in-law tries to needle her; as a result, the issues they have do not result in fights any longer. Even her neighbors, who earlier disparaged her, have noticed and commented upon the change in her attitude and behavior.

Manjula's improved knowledge of sexual health and safer sex practices has given her the confidence and the desire to tentatively rebuild her physical relationship with her husband. This is one of the things that have helped bridge the gap between husband and wife and has led to a better marriage. Through the training, Manjula also learned about family planning methods, which motivated her to go and have a tubectomy. She has begun to eat better, consuming more fruits and vegetables because she now knows how important good nutrition is for maintaining good health and warding off diseases.

The training also gave Manjula the skills to manage her finances better. She has begun saving regularly in a bank account by budgeting her expenses prudently. She has also taken an educational insurance policy for her son. She aspires for him to study much more than she herself could and hopes that he becomes a doctor.

In the long term, Manjula hopes that after working for another five years or so she can return to her native village and live with her husband and son again. She believes that recalling the key points of the WiF training in difficult situations has helped her successfully face many challenges in her life. By applying what she has learned in the training, Manjula has gained the respect and appreciation of people in her family. She looks towards the future with confidence and a sense of peace.



A turnaround

Manisha used to hold herself aloof from the family, locking her things so no one could use them and eating alone rather than sharing her meals with the family. She did not have a very cordial relationship with her husband or her in-laws.

Now, she makes an effort to become involved with her family. She has started to spend more time at home, to eat her meals with her family, and to communicate more amicably with them. She has also started to take part in the decisions about problems at home, rather than leaving them to her husband. She expresses her views on important matters as necessary and in an appropriate way. Her husband and children are very happy with this change. Her pleased mother-in-law says, *"Now she takes care of me more than ever."*

Manisha says that the training made her more conscientious about keeping her home neat and clean. She also makes others in her neighborhood aware about health and hygiene issues including common misconceptions about women's health. Recently, she was able to use the things she learned in the training to help a pregnant neighbor to take care of herself and have a safe delivery. She encouraged the woman to go to the hospital, eat properly, and to write down numbers of various emergency health services so that if any complications arose, she would be safe.

Putting new knowledge on financial planning to use, Manisha has started budgeting her household expenses and

opened recurring and fixed deposits in the bank, to save money for emergencies. She is also planning to buy jewelry for her daughters, a little at a time, that can eventually be used for their wedding. Manisha aspires to buy her own vehicle and home, and has started saving and planning for those too. She also speaks to the women in her neighborhood regularly about saving and other issues related to financial planning.

Manisha used to believe that women were inferior to men and incapable of achieving as much as them. This belief has been reversed and she now treats her daughters the same as she did her son, giving them equal attention. She has convinced her husband to do the same, and to share some of the household chores with her.

Manisha believes that the training has changed her attitude towards others completely. It has taught her to listen to others, be considerate of them, to try to find amicable solutions to problems, and to keep calm in times of crisis. This has greatly influenced her relationships at work, at home and in her neighborhood. She feels that what she has learned in the training has helped her gain the respect and affection of the people around her. A grateful Manisha says, *"I thank Swasti, Welspun and the Walmart Foundation for giving me an opportunity to attend this training. It has totally changed my life."*



Re-thinking Health

When Renuka initially joined the life skills training program, managing time for the foundational course was a challenge. She is elated to report that over a period of time, with intense counseling and discussions undertaken with her family members, they understood the significance of the trainings and supported her, allowing her to manage time effectively. *"It was my husband who was able to see many positive changes in me, motivated me to join the advanced training course and peer educator's training"*, says Renuka.

The sessions on sexual and reproductive health allowed Renuka to make some important changes. She earlier used cloth during her menstruation, but after learning about the negative effects of improperly cleaned cloth, she has shifted to using sanitary pads, which she changes every 6 hours. *"As a result of the communication sessions during the training, I am confident and not reluctant to share my problems related to reproductive health with the doctor"*, shares Renuka. Today she educates and motivates her family members, neighbors and many young girls to not to shy away from consulting a doctor for reproductive health issues as it can be life threatening, if ignored.

The meaning of 'Health is Wealth' has finally dawn on Renuka. By successfully following a nutritious diet, she has increased her hemoglobin levels from 10 g/dL to 12.5 g/dL in the past year. She feels thrilled when her husband appreciates

her new perspectives and efforts towards cooking. Her sister-in-law has also been keen to learn about balanced meals and Renuka feels that teaching her has boosted her confidence even further.

Renuka has saved money on a regular basis in the last year and recently bought and installed a water filter with her savings. She feels grateful to WalMart Foundation, Swasti and her factory management for the opportunity to set goals for her family and the support to achieve them. She feels that the sessions on health, finances etc. would have been incomplete without the negotiation and communication skills. These skills are essential to bring on-board the family members and make important changes.

Renuka is enthusiastic about being a peer educator and looks forward to sharing her life skills with her colleagues at the factory.



A role model

Padma was middle-aged; not in very good health and was quite known among her colleagues for being rude. She was frequently absent from work without permission and would get aggressive when questioned. During peak production times; when she was asked to do extra work, she would get angry and refuse. Padma remembers that she struggled to deal with stress at work and would be irritable at home. She would speak angrily with her daughters and sometimes beat them. She argued with her husband and resented having the sole responsibility for all the household chores. She also had an unhappy relationship with her mother-in-law, who blamed her for not bearing any sons.

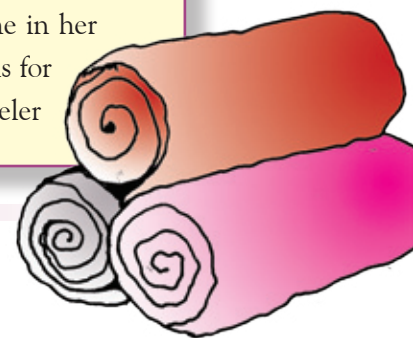
Padma says that before the training, *"I used to be confused and struggled to arrive at solutions for the problems I faced."* The training taught Padma how to deal with day to day situations, using simple skills like communication, financial management, working with other people. *"Post training my communication style has changed. I now practice assertive communication techniques with my daughters. I listen to them and have stopped scolding and beating them. Now my children and other family members respect me and the relationships within my family have strengthened. We are much happier than before."*, says Padma

Padma also talks with her daughters about personal and menstrual hygiene, the value of nutritious food etc. She and the girls have started to take better care of their

health. Padma says that she can see the results, as all three of them are healthier and more energetic now. The training has given Padma a good understanding of basic health and hygiene measures as well as what health resources are available in the local area. Padma found the courage to speak with her mother-in-law and convince her that giving birth to daughters is not a mistake. Her daughters are not less than boys and she has instilled this attitude into her daughters as well. She has also talked to her husband about gender equality; as a result, he now lends her a hand in the household chores, as do her daughters.

Padma put her new knowledge about health, gender issues, and social security to good use by helping one of her supervisors obtain a ration-card. A co-worker's husband was diagnosed with cancer and Padma used her knowledge to obtain benefits under the ESI scheme, helping them with admission to an ESI hospital. When further treatment proved necessary, Padma helped them to get Rs. 1,60,000 through the ESI scheme and obtain further treatment at Narayana Hrudayalaya hospital in Bangalore.

"For the first time in the 18 years that we have been married, my husband and I have started to make a budget together," Padma states proudly. They have started a savings account at the post office and save Rs.700 every month. *"We now practice collective decision making and have started planning for our daughters' future,"* Padma says. After the training, for the first time in her life, Padma set financial goals for herself – to buy a two-wheeler



and to build a house. She purchased the two-wheeler using her savings six months ago; she is now planning to take a loan to build the house. *"I am confident I will repay the loan with proper planning,"* she asserts.

Padma wants to help the women in her community to stand on their own feet and has brought them together to form a self-help group; she has been elected the president. The women meet regularly, share their concerns and their knowledge; they save and lend money to each other. She has been able to help many of the women to access ration cards and to open bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) in order to ensure access to financial services such as savings & deposit accounts, remittance, credit, insurance, pensions, etc. in an affordable manner. The self-help group has a joint account a bank and Padma has delegated the responsibility of maintaining the account to one of the other members in the group because she does not get the time to do so due to her work at the factory.

In the recent national elections that took place, she made it a point to vote and encouraged other women in her neighborhood to vote, as well. *"I want to be a role model to the other women,"* says Padma.

Taking charge

Soumya was in the middle of a divorce, but was scared to appear in court. She was depressed and had considered suicide at one time. She did not make plans for herself or her daughter's future because she thought there was none. Observing a happy couple angered her. At work, she behaved very aggressively with her co-workers and at home, she was very quiet and meek. Soumya's daughter had many allergies and this was another cause for concern. Being pre-occupied led to mistakes at work, for which she received warnings, making her more anxious.

Today, Soumya's communication skills have made her more confident in her personal life. She speaks assertively at home and testified in court in her divorce case. She told the judge that she would not divorce her husband for 2 reasons - the first being that she knew he wanted to remarry and did not want another woman to suffer the same fate that she did, and the second being that her husband had not supported her or her daughter till date, and did not offer any alimony even after the divorce. She no longer gets upset when people ask about her marriage convinces them that she can take care of herself and her daughter.

Soumya's new financial skills have helped her to budget and plan for her daughter's future. She still gives her income to her mother to manage; she now works together with her to budget and save. She has begun investing in gold and is planning to build her own house. Soumya wants to ensure

that her daughter gets all the opportunities which she herself was deprived of. She makes enough time to spend with her daughter and follows up on her education with her and her teachers.

Soumya's knowledge on nutrition and hygiene has helped in managing her daughter's allergies. She now makes sure to buy and cook a variety of nutritious foods for herself and her daughter, including leafy greens, vegetables and fruits. She makes sure that they both eat all their meals on time. Soumya never misses breakfast now, which was a common occurrence before the training. Soumya reports that her daughter's health has improved significantly since she put into practice what she learned in the training.

Soumya says that the things she has learned about gender have also helped her to have a better relationship with her brother. She taught her brother what she learned in the training, and now he helps her out more in the house and respects her opinions and decisions more. Soumya says that her brother helps her out in the kitchen now. *"Sometimes in the evenings he prepares tea for me even without me asking him, which I could only dream about before,"* she chuckles. He and Soumya are working together now to save enough money to build a house of their own.

Soumya is also more involved with her neighborhood now. She says that as part of the training she learned how to interact with government services and departments; as a result, and so she has taken it upon herself to approach them whenever something

is wrong in her neighborhood. Recently, when the streetlights in her neighborhood were left on for three consecutive days, she went to the electricity board to complain about it, along with the other people in her vicinity. When the public dustbin in her area was not cleared for more than a week, she approached the municipality and got them to clean it out.

Soumya has grown confident about her abilities. She has taken charge of her own life and she is not afraid to take the responsibility for the well-being of people around her. She may have contemplated suicide once, but irrespective of her divorce, she has much to look forward and will not give up on life.



Standing tall

"I used to work mechanically without much interest, came to work very late and would take leave often. In order to save money, I would not cook at home but ended up spending money on medicines and illness. I never interacted much with the coworkers.", says Lalitha describing her old self. *"Nowadays, I wake up early and finish my chores at home and attend work on time. I only used to eat rice and tamarind water but have added vegetables, egg and milk to my diet. I don't fall ill often and don't spend unnecessarily on doctor visits",* reports Lalitha.

Lalitha is the head of the family and has taken on this responsibility, delegating appropriately to her son to manage home and work. Her punctuality at work and

efficiency has been noticed and appreciated by her supervisors, only motivating Lalitha more. Being able to perform her duties has increased her self confidence. Her son has noticed the change in her demeanor and also supports her with household chores.

Lalitha finds solace in the temple and uses the visits to manage her stress. She realizes that everybody has problems and one needs to confront and overcome them. Lalitha works with her son to reduce expenditure and save money. They are now saving Rs. 5000 per month and are setting aside money for future goals. She has promised to conduct her son's wedding without taking dowry and is confident about leading a happy life.



Professional Level Changes



Section 2

Professional level changes

Many women choose to take up work in the manufacturing sector because of financial constraints. They often do not have role models at home and do not know what it means to work for a full day, with colleagues, in a structured environment. While they learn the technical requirements, there are other factors that prevent them from excelling and doing their best. While individual changes described in the previous section play a role, there are specific skills that must be learnt and applied in the work context as well.

For many of the semi-literate women, there is limited understanding of their role in the entire production process. Most of them work with “blinkers on”, limiting themselves to their assigned tasks. Fostering leadership skills and developing a sense of ownership are key aspects of the program, although challenging. Combining this with communication skills and team-work has meant that women who complete the program are able to perform better as individuals and teams.

The Foundational and Advanced Trainings have allowed women to get a better understanding of their roles and responsibility in the

workplace. As a result, professional qualities like; punctuality, adherence to office rules and regulations, working in teams to complete tasks within assigned deadlines, following safety precautions etc. have been reported by the women and their supervisors.

Improved communication and interaction with co-workers has helped them create a better work environment. These improved relationships and the accrued benefits such as recognition and promotion at work, inculcate a sense of ownership towards the factory and lead to conservation of factory resources.

Finally, many women's ambitions have been stirred to achieve more at the workplace.



Learning to lead

Nagarathna says, “I used to be very aggressive when speaking with others. The training taught me different styles of communication. Now, I think about what style of communication will be most effective when I speak to a particular person and use that.” She also says that the training has helped her to manage her temper. Now, when someone scolds her, she does not immediately answer back, but waits until her initial reaction passes, and then clarifies the matter with them calmly. Her improved communication skills have helped Nagarathna to bond with her team and be noticed by her supervisors.

Nagarathna's supervisor, Mr. Pampapathy, Assistant Manager of Compliance, says, “I have observed that since the training six months ago, Nagarathna's communication has improved; she mingles with the team and communicates assertively. She takes her role as a member of the health and safety committee seriously. She comes and talks to the management about health and safety issues in the factory and resolves them. She is no longer aggressive with her co-workers.” This is also the reason for Nagarathna's promotion as the person in-charge in the quality checking department; previously she was one among the quality checkers. Being part of the health and safety committee at the factory, she takes pride in looking after the welfare of her co-workers in both these positions of responsibility. She ensures that she follows all the necessary health and safety precautions, and tells her co-workers why it is important to do so.

At work, she is more respectful towards her

supervisors and has stopped taking leave without asking for it. She comes to work on time now and meets the production targets within the specified timelines. She says that she uses the different communication techniques she has learned in the training in different situations, and that helps her to work better with her colleagues. Her improved performance at work has also been a boost to her self-confidence. Mr. Pampapathy, her manager, says, “She is very disciplined at work. She never takes leave without informing the management.”

Polishing a diamond

“I would give my monthly salary to my mother and think that my responsibility towards my household was over without being bothered about whether it was enough to cover our household expenditure or not. I had a very indifferent attitude towards various aspects of my life; I would only do what my mother or my supervisor asked me to do, like a machine, without being bothered about the end result of the task”, recalls Santhoshkani. She had also been very impulsive since her childhood and would react in situations without thinking, often leading to fights with her family and co-workers.

Today, Santhoshkani feels there has been a tremendous improvement in her communication and she handles multitasking at her work with a cool temperament. Recently, Santhoshkani took additional responsibility of the welfare of employees when the HR Manager was on maternity leave. She was appreciated for





the initiatives that she took during this period.

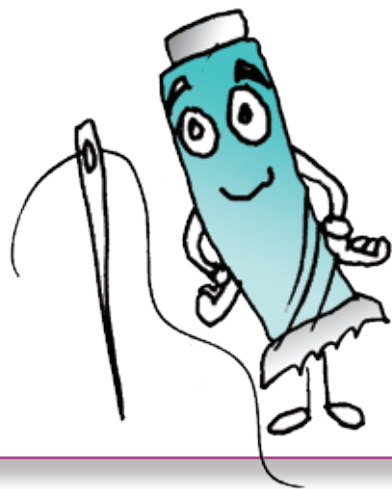
“Santhoshkani’s planning skills have evolved over the last year which can be attributed to the life-skills training. She now checks the current stock status before giving an estimate for purchase of production material. She has also developed a habit of checking with me about any work that needs to be completed, before she leaves for home every day” says her supervisor. Her Unit Manager says, *“I see a lot of improvement in her work. She now makes efforts to understand the work and completes it on time. If she makes any mistakes she does not hesitate to accept it.”*

From being a mere follower of instructions to being the leader of the young women’s wing of a women’s federation (Vembu Makkal Sakthi Iyakkam), Santhoshkani attributes the transformation to the WiF program. As part the Federation’s activities, Santhoshkani recently organized

awareness programs for young adolescent girls where she shared with them information on hygiene practices during menstruation, different communication styles, active listening and significance of budgeting. Santhoshkani also recently convinced the management of the Federation to provide sessions on sexuality to adolescent girls and she herself undertook these sessions which included knowledge on gender socialization and family planning.

Santhoshkani has emerged as a more socially sensitive, confident and assertive woman who now takes initiative not only for welfare of family and workplace but also the society at large. Santhoshkani’s teammates feel quite obliged to her as she helps many of them, who are illiterate, to learn basic language and maths.

Santhoshkani’s unit manger feels that she is a diamond who has been polished by the WiF program. Santhoshkani dreams of climbing up the corporate ladder, for which she has bought an English dictionary to enhance her language skills.



Breaking the silence

Reeta believes that she has always been a very careless individual, with no vision for her life. She had a casual attitude towards her health, time management and expenses, ready to do only the minimum required. The WiF program changed her through - from a quiet person to an assertive individual.

Reeta is now very punctual and follows a time table for the day to achieve her targets in time. Recently, Reeta brought issues of harassment to the notice of the management; she had experienced them over a period of time but had been silent.

Her supervisor reports that earlier Reeta did not speak much and was a reserved employee, but over the last one year she has emerged as a key propagator of the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and informs her colleagues about the various facilities available in the factory such as masks etc., which are essential to use in order to avoid accidents.

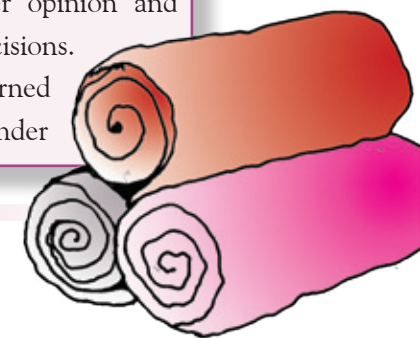
“I am now able to balance work and home related stress much better and try to resolve it coolly. This training has fixed many unresolved issues in my life whether it was health, or my communication skills which were due to my under confidence. I would recommend this training to every woman from rural India who has been forced to be a part of the culture of silence” says Reeta.

Leading the way

Just 2 weeks after starting work, Avni had the opportunity to be part of the foundational training of the WiF program. Due to her active participation, she was selected for the advanced training. In light of the potential that she showed in the advanced training, the head of her department recommended her participation in the Training of Trainers (ToT) as well.

When Avni joined the factory she was very new to the working environment. She lacked confidence and did not believe she could do much. *“My world was like that of a frog in a well, full of limitations and boundaries.”* she recalls. The training gave her the skills to communicate effectively with people in her workplace and her family. It taught her how to behave with people at work. Rather than being aggressive, she learned how to be assertive and how to get people to work with each other. At the graduation ceremony of the advanced training program, Avni convinced some of her male team members to play the roles of women in the play that they put up. *“I think of that as a very big achievement”*, she laughs.

Avni believes that the leadership training she received has given her a positive attitude. The training has also given her knowledge about health, finances and budgeting that she has used to make better decisions for herself. She has shared this knowledge with her family, with the result that they now ask for her opinion and consult her on major decisions. She used what she has learned through the training on gender



issues to change her father's mind on her professional advancement. He thought that she should not work outside the home and was against her attending the ToT, but she won him over with examples of women like Kalpana Chawla and Kiran Bedi who have achieved great things in their lives.

Avni's drive to succeed has paid off. Her supervisor, Mr. Amish Vaja, General Manager says, "Earlier she was very shy but now Avni has become the role model for every worker in the factory." Walmart Foundation has recognized Avni's excellence, as well, and she was invited to share her experience at a milestone meeting in the U.S. She says, "I never expected this kind of achievement. But due to it, I have received recognition from the factory, my family and from all my relatives." The icing on the cake is the special recognition award that she received from the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Ms. Anandiben Patel.

Along with her professional advancement, Avni has decided to pursue her higher education. She has joined the Bachelors of Commerce course at Tolani Commerce College in Gandhidham. Avni is very grateful to the WiF program. "Through the training, I have been able to fulfill all my dreams", she says. "This program has changed my life. I am trying to become the best trainer I can be, so that I can change my trainees' lives too."

Climbing the ladder

Pandiamma has completed both the foundational and the advanced training and has also been nominated by her factory to participate in the Training of Trainers (ToT). Pandiamma says, "Through the trainings, I have learnt about reproductive health, communication skills, gender equality, and many other things. At the factory, my supervisor appreciated my enhanced leadership and assertive communication skills, and promoted me to the position of supervisor."

At work, Pandiamma's improved communication with her team has made her a more capable leader. "My communication skills have improved a lot and I know how to get work done with a team in a friendly manner. My team members are happy with my style of functioning." Her team says, "We work well and produce more under her leadership. She doesn't shout at us." Pandiamma ensures that her team wears all the proper safety equipments while working. She also ensures that they finish their daily target before leaving. "I have become responsible", says Pandiamma. "Being a supervisor I have a lot of work to do, and understanding my responsibilities I almost don't take leave at all - only for emergencies at home." She has taken on the additional responsibility representing her co-workers on the first aid committee, anti sexual harassment committee, grievance committee, and environment committee.

Pandiamma says that the training that she has received through the WiF program is what has helped her become a good supervisor. "Through the training, I learnt

how to motivate others, how to manage a team, how to recognize my team members' strengths and allocate work accordingly. If my team has any problem I call them for a meeting, discuss it with them, and with their suggestion take a decision. This helps me to make them co-operate each other in their work. I also monitor their production every day and record it, so that when they reach particular targets they get their incentives", Pandiamma explains.

Pandiamma's manager, Mr. Ganeshan of Peacock Apparels says, "I have promoted her to supervisor, because she is capable of reaching better targets." He held her up as an example to other supervisors, as well, saying, "Learn from Pandiamma, how she works and motivates the team." He gave her a special bonus of Rs. 1000 to laud her good work during Deepavali. Not only he, but others in the factory have also noticed Pandiamma's good work. The production manager, Mr. Mayilvaghanan, felicitated her during Ayudha Pooja. "I was excited when I received a prize for my hard and sincere work from him", gushes Pandiamma.

Pandiamma says that the training has taught her how to manage her increased responsibilities without becoming stressed. "Prior planning helps me to reduce my stress. At the end of each day I check with everyone on my team whether they would be taking leave the next day. Accordingly, I request my supervisor to assign me additional laborers for next day's work. They also support me, and it becomes easy to reach the daily target."

Workers' Representative

It was after joining Welspun that Jigna got the chance to attend the WiF program and completed both the foundational and advanced training. The WiF team found her highly motivated, both to participate in the training and to change her behavior in accordance with what she learned.

Jigna's improved communication skills have completely changed the perception of her colleagues about her. From an aggressive, argumentative co-worker, Jigna has become someone who unites her department. She is able to bring them together to make and implement decisions and has brought about a sense of ownership among her co-workers. An indicator of this is the state of the toilets in their department. Earlier, Jigna says, she would not bother about the toilets. But after the training, not only does she make sure they are clean, she also makes her co-workers aware of the adverse effects on their health from unclean toilets. Jigna proudly asserts, "You can easily see that the toilets in our department are very neat and clean."

The management at Welspun has noticed the change in Jigna's behavior and how she has been able to motivate her colleagues to come together on various issues. They have therefore selected her as a "workers' representative" to act as a bridge between the management and workers in her department. Mr. Amish Vaja, General Manager says, "I have noticed many positive behavioral and communication changes in Jigna after

being part of the WiF program. She now has better communication and leadership qualities. Jigna's increased ownership towards the factory is motivating. I wish her great success in life."

Jigna was deeply affected by the sessions on gender issues. She now feels strongly that it is unjust for women's lives to be restricted because of others' opinions. She firmly believes that women can do anything. Jigna says, "Success does not come to you, you go to it. I am willing to work until I reach the pinnacle of success." Jigna believes that the WiF program has transformed and brought happiness into her life.

Overcoming disability

Radhamani is slightly hearing impaired and used to have difficulty in understanding others. She also lacked the confidence to reach out to others on her team and shied away from taking any responsibility at work. She says, "I was irresponsible at work and used to place the 'checked' stickers on garments without checking the piece properly."

One of the most important aspects of the training, she believes, is the skill of active listening that she was taught as part of the communication module. Radhamani says, "I use active listening techniques at work with the supervisor and my co-workers. This way, I am able to understand them clearly and

Blooming confidence

Selvi has been inspired by the WiF program to change her life. She was earlier scared of sharing her opinions at work because she thought others would belittle her. She viewed others very negatively, took offense easily, and spoke thoughtlessly. She did not care to do her work and only stayed the minimum time necessary.

Today, Selvi communicates better with her colleagues and supervisor. She is no longer afraid to speak to them, and this has helped her become better at her job. "I clarify my doubts with my supervisor before starting work. I have reduced making silly mistakes" says Selvi. She also has a better idea of when to speak and when not to speak.

On the bus, Selvi keeps others from distracting the bus driver. In the factory, she thinks twice before disturbing her colleagues or supervisors when they are speaking. She only approaches them if she has something important to say, and even then, she asks for permission before interrupting them.

Selvi has learned to keep calm when somebody shouts at her for no reason. "I keep quiet at that moment, and later, when the person has calmed down, explain what went wrong", says Selvi. By doing this, she has learned to give her colleagues the benefit of doubt. She also actively tries to be positive towards them by praising them when they are creative or they are efficient at their work.

then give my response. As I understood the importance of my role in the production chain, I began to concentrate more on my work. Now I am not worried about my hearing disability. I feel more confident."

The change in Radhamani's work has been noticed by her co-worker Amudha, who says, "She communicates well and concentrates at work." Radhamani's understanding and appreciation for her work reflects in her being able to finish her daily production target and finding time to help others. She has also understood the importance of protective equipments, using it herself and insisting upon others using it too.

Along with active listening, Radhamani learned assertive communication. This has helped her to communicate better with her manager and co-workers in the workplace. Radhamani's manager, Arokiaraj, reports, "The changes I see in her are that she speaks boldly, gives notice before taking leave and increased productivity." Radhamani says, "These days I communicate assertively with my co-workers and they are very friendly towards me. I clear my doubts about work at the right time with the appropriate people and teach others what I learn." She feels a sense of pride in her work and her workplace, tries to keep the facilities clean and encourage her co-workers to do the same.

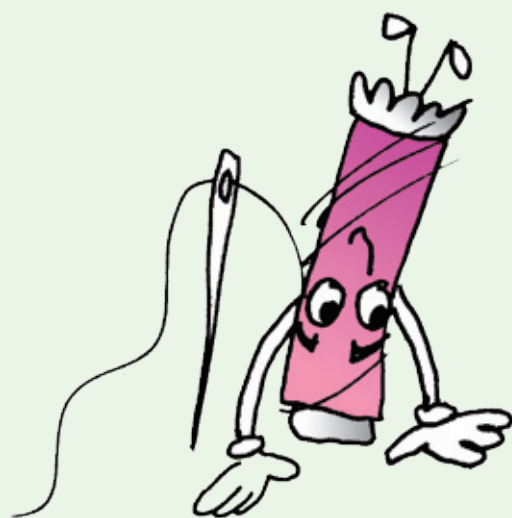


Selvi has also improved her work habits and her commitment towards the factory. She now keeps her own workspace scrupulously clean. Selvi reports, “I even try to keep my work hall clean. If I see garbage in any corner of the hall, I make sure to have it removed.” She keeps track of the materials used in production and reminds the storekeeper to purchase the required materials. “I do my work with great commitment and use my skills optimally. I do not waste any production materials.” says Selvi. Along with an increased commitment towards her work, Selvi has also become more committed towards her co-workers.

She tells new workers about the documents they need to bring to work, and educates them about the ESI and PF benefits available to them. She encourages them to be on time and to keep their work tables clean. Most importantly, she makes them feel valued. “I make sure that my decisions don’t encroach on others’ freedom. I believe in team work. Each one’s skill is required to complete a product”, says Selvi.

The management at Ramesh Flowers has noticed Selvi’s dedication to her job, her commitment to her team, and her artistic skill; and has recently promoted her from her position as an assembler (team worker) to a craft designer (staff), where she is in charge of creating new designs of flowers and making sure they are assembled correctly by the workers. Selvi is happy with this new position, and her supervisor, Mr. Ramkumar, says, “I am very impressed. She gives 100% commitment to her work, understands requirements well and is able to

create the explained design. She is very creative and stays as long as it is necessary to finish the work given, before going home. She is very soft-spoken and polite and I appreciate the way she teaches the new workers. She has been appreciated by the Managing Director Ms. Manju Singhwi as well, and got an additional incentive for her good work.” Her colleagues also appreciate Selvi, saying, “She always encourages others to be on time. She teaches us how to speak to others. She advises us not to fight with others for silly matters. She is very courageous but also kind to others. She manages time well; she volunteers to do any work and is very responsible about it.”



Sky is the Limit

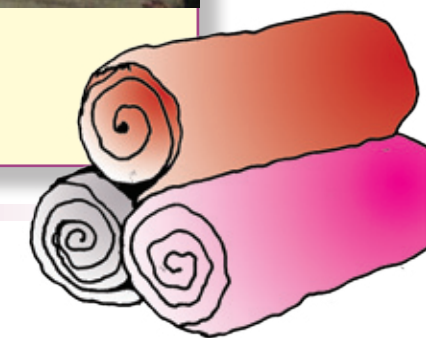
Salma says, “The life-skills session in the last one year has worked like a therapy for me, as I have again started to express my-self in the public sphere more positively. I have regained my confidence that I had lost because I had to leave my education to support my family”. The WiF program has brought back optimism into her life.

After the training program, Salma has become more aware about the safety facilities at the factory. “She has also started undertaking many team responsibilities and often is heard telling her coworkers that it is the collective responsibilities of the employees of the factory and not the sole responsibility of the management to keep the toilets clean”, says her supervisor.

She now often gets compliments for her mature and polite behavior which boosts

her confidence further. “I have far more respect for my work now than ever and now I know that there are many ways I can continue my education and grow in my professional life. The life skills program taught me that there are challenges in every body’s life but how an individual overcomes them, makes them different”, says Salma. She today motivates other employees to be punctual and efficient at the work. Her supervisor often asks Salma to monitor and check work done by other tailors which makes her feel that she is being perceived as a responsible and reliable worker.

Salma who has recently become a peer educator thinks that sky is the limit for her dreams. She is confident of using the techniques she has learnt to help others and achieve her goals.



Metamorphosis

Shila feels there has been a sea of change in the way she deals with people and her children since she completed the WiF program. She feels that she has become more patient, listens to other's perspectives and then responds calmly even if there are differences in opinion. Earlier, she fights within her household and workplace, but after attending training she realized that there were issues with her communication skills that she needed to work on. With her new skills, she feels that she is able to convince and negotiate in different aspects of her life without getting into arguments or using abusive language which had become a habit earlier.

She now does not absent herself without taking permission. Her supervisor comments, *"Shila has completely changed her style of communication. She understands people and gives respect to their point of view which is unlike earlier times when she was always ready to have arguments"*. She has also begun to take up lead roles and organized the Karyakari Samithi (Workers' Committee) meeting.

Above all, she has developed a more optimistic attitude towards life and her work. Earlier she had a habit of comparing herself with others and feeling depressed; this sometimes led to suicidal thoughts. She is now more forward looking who motivates new employees to lead their life without giving up on their dreams.

Shila today feels quite elated when her friends at work and her husband at home, appreciate her for her transformation over the past few years. She wishes that this takes her to higher professional altitudes in the future.

Manager in waiting

Shanmugarani joined the factory as a laborer and it was after completing the WiF program that she was promoted to the position of assistant supervisor. This is no small feat and is demonstration of how she has applied all that she has learnt.

In the factory, Shanmugarani says that the training module on leadership helped her become a better employee and a better assistant supervisor. Her supervisor, Mr. Thiyagu, says that she is a sincere worker who does her work well and never takes unauthorized leave. In fact, Shanmugarani recently received a bonus for 100% attendance. Her supervisor also says that on the days when he takes leave, Shanmugarani steps up and does an even better job as a supervisor. He says that she has shown that she cares about her workers by asking for bonuses for them when they do good work, and by reprimanding them when they do bad work. *"There are 60 workers performing under my direct supervision; I appreciate them whenever necessary so as to motivate them and to encourage them to enhance their performance. At the same time, I strictly adhere to rules and regulations and place strict controls on them. With this strategic approach, I am able to manage my team. I also encourage others to appreciate fellow workers when they do good work, to motivate and praise them when they deserve it"*, Shanmugarani proudly states.

Shanmugarani takes the responsibility for the people under her seriously and the training has taught her how to communicate effectively with her supervisors to make sure the people she works with are safe. *"Because of the communication techniques I learned in*

Carrying it forward

It was after working for about six months at the factory that Vanitha became part of the WiF program. The WiF team identified her as a reflective person, with high levels of acceptance about her behavior.

"I was a very short tempered individual which I gradually realized was a reason for many misunderstandings within family and colleagues. I would get impulsive and burst like a cooker on small issues", reflects Vanitha.

In the year since her training, Vanitha has worked in a focused manner to change her aggressive attitude to being an assertive individual. She is more polite and uses communication techniques to garner support from her family to fulfill her individual goals. She was able to convince her husband accept having domestic help, so that she could reach factory on time. She uses the "counting to 10" technique when she is angry and thinks before she responds. This is unlike earlier times when she reacted in situations of dissent without listening to the full argument of the other person.

Vanitha believes that she and many other members of her production batch have become team players now, rather than focusing on their own individual targets. After the training program, each member of the batch work together to complete the assigned work within the given timeline. This has been particularly been observed by the supervisors and production managers of the batch.

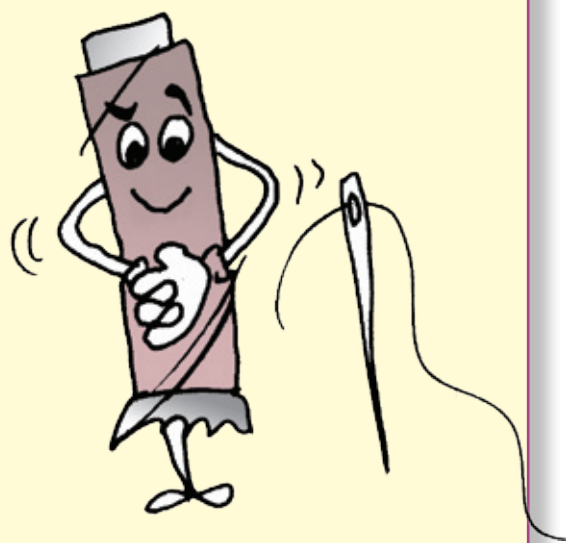
the training, I am able to negotiate with the supervisors and human resource officers for the welfare of the workers demanding fair wages and salary raises. I try to make sure that they provide proper fruits and food for the workers who toil amidst dust in a hazardous work environment. I also advised the supervisors to appoint load men to carry heavy-weight articles as women workers cannot engage in heavy manual work without injuring themselves. Accordingly, the management has appointed men to do the onerous tasks", she says with satisfaction. She supports her workers in other ways, as well. For example, for those workers who are partially literate, she makes sure to give them tasks so that they can improve their reading and writing skills. Shanmugarani's interest in the welfare of her co-workers has prompted her to serve on the safety committee in her factory, where she works diligently.

She says that the communication module in the training has also helped her more generally in her interactions with her co-workers, family and friends. *"I am able to grasp others' attitude and mentality and accordingly I am able to act, react and converse with them"*, says Shanmugarani. She says that the training made her realize how detrimental gossip could be, and that she politely avoids these interactions. Through the training, she has also learned how to deal with problematic situations. *"If anybody exhibits anger or irritation towards me, I respond with politeness and calm, not reacting or retaliating to their anger. Even if I have a confrontation with somebody, I am able to negotiate a reconciliation and discuss options with them. By and large, I am now willing to face problems instead of running away from them"*, says Shanmugarani.



Vanitha's supervisor says "She used to spend most of her time gossiping even during working hours, but now I am amazed to see how she utilizes her free time to educate her colleagues about health and nutrition issues and motivates other employees to stay back and join the life skills course." Vanitha recently brought an issue of improper behavior with a new employee, to the attention of the management and convinced them that the new employees required motivation and not threats to complete work.

Vanitha is prepared to take her new confidence and skills to another level by becoming a peer educator and sharing the life changing techniques with her colleagues.



An all-rounder

Asha was not a confident person and depended on her husband for taking decisions on even trivial matters related to home and personal life. She found work at the factory difficult and would often be rebuked by her supervisor; Asha thought this was only to belittle her and did not pay heed.

When Asha was asked to participate in the WiF program, she did not know her own capability. The WiF program helped her find herself, at work and at home. She has improved her communication style and works closely with her co-workers and supervisors. She led a team for a competition called "Parivartan" organized in the factory and won a gold medal & trophy. Her earlier conflicts with colleagues have reduced as she tries to understand the matter and then comment on the same. She is polite while talking to anyone, which is a long way from her older self who shouted to get all her work done.

Asha is energetic and eager to learn. She has realized that it is necessary to take suggestions in positive spirit to grow in life. Earlier, she preferred to work individually and there was no coordination with her co-workers. Today, her confidence and communication style have made her a team player, leading to increased productivity at the factory. Asha's ability to take decisions has also improved. She takes practical decisions based on the information available to her and after considering all consequences. This has meant that she is

able to lead a team and achieve targets set by the factory management.

Asha has become aware of women's rights and the redressal committee against sexual harassment in the factory. Though she is not aware of any incidents in the factory, she is confident of obtaining the necessary help if the need arises.

With no absenteeism and improved performance, Asha has earned a good name for herself in the factory, with the management and her co-workers.

No barrier for learning

Vasanti joined the factory as a checker and was promoted to her current position as a jobber, in the finish and folding department; a position she has now held for twelve years.

Her long work experience and her new skills have made her a valued advisor at her workplace. When colleagues come to her with their problems, she listens patiently and speaks to them compassionately. Because of her lengthy and varied work and life experiences, she is able to advise them well. Vasanti says that she has learned not only how to communicate but when to do so. For instance, when her supervisor rebukes her or shouts at her; rather than arguing back immediately as she used to before, she now listens, keeps silent, and then at an appropriate time speaks to them directly to address the underlying issue. She also says that the training has made her

more conscientious towards her work and she takes the lead in sharing the work with her co-workers in order to achieve their department's targets.

Vasanti says that the training has given her an appreciation of teamwork that she did not have before. At work, she has become more of a team player. Vasanti says that she now tries to bring people together to work as a cohesive team in her department.

Another important takeaway from the program for Vasanti is what she has learned about gender issues. She is convinced that men and women are equally capable of doing things when provided with equal opportunities, and counsels her daughters-in-law to believe the same. Her daughters-in-law respect her for this. Vasanti's understanding of gender issues and her listening skills and wisdom have also been noticed at her workplace, where she has been made a part of the anti-sexual harassment committee.

Her colleagues and supervisors at work report that they are very happy about the changes they see in her style of communication. They tell Vasanti that they can now come to her for solutions to their problems. Vasanti says, "I am very happy with the training program that has helped me shape my personality. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to learn."



Rebirth

Sumathi had become disillusioned with life. She was an introvert who hardly spoke to anyone at work or at home. She had no friends and used to do work that was given by her supervisor, without much interest. She never raised any questions, at work or at home.

Sumathi feels that the stress management techniques that were taught in the WiF program helped her get over difficulties she had experienced early in life. This along with the other skills she learnt, have helped change her outlook.

“Sumathi never used to ask questions earlier; but now she has started to take interest, clarifies her doubts, accepts her mistakes and corrects them”, says her supervisor of JVS Export. Sumathi’s self-confidence got a boost when her supervisor appreciated her for pointing out that some co-workers were

not providing actual production details. Sumathi was recently awarded for maximum productivity as a tailor. She stitches fringes of 90-100 towels per day. Her increased productivity has meant increased wages as well.

“Sumathi now does not take leave without informing me and uses the needle guard mask regularly, following all the rules of the factory” says her division manager. Sumathi motivated another co-worker to stop taking unnecessary leave. She explained to her that one person taking leave often meant that other workers had to do overtime and complete the work. This resulted in her co-worker changing her habit and becoming regular.

Sumathi has now enrolled with Annamalai University to pursue a degree in Social Work as she wants to work for society and people.



Conclusion



Conclusion

The stories of these 26 women make one wonder. So much appears to change with a little knowledge and skill. It is clear that for these women, that the change within them has had a ripple effect on their families, their communities and their workplace.

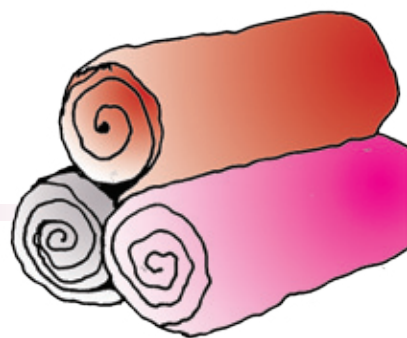
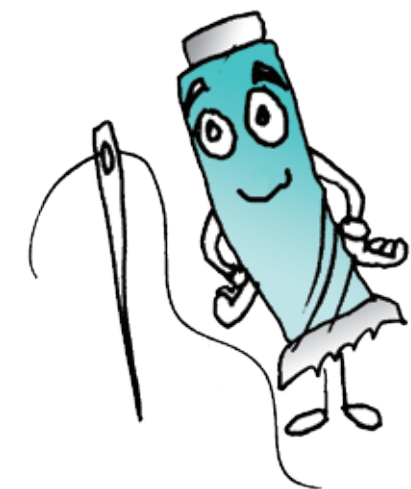
These stories represent the small and big changes that are possible to achieve, when women are empowered with knowledge and skills. For the few thousand women who have been part of the first phase of the WiF program in India, there are a few million more who need similar knowledge and skills; to be able to take charge of their lives, their families and their communities. Women, no matter illiterate and poor; can contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of their country, if only they were given the right tools.

We hope these simple stories highlight the potential of the Women in Factories program. We want these small ripples to get stronger and larger as they spread across the country. More factories investing on workers, especially women workers, through life skills education will allow for prosperous companies to support empowered women, creating prosperous communities.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBO	Capacity Building Officers
ESI	Employees State Insurance
HR	Human Resource
LIC	Life Insurance Corporation
PF	Provident Fund
PMJDY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
PPEs	Personal Protective Equipments
WiF	Women in Factories



Glossary

Advanced Training: Advanced Training is a core component of the ‘Women in Factories’ program. It is conducted for a duration of 100 hours, for two cohorts of women (65 each cohort) in each of the WiF implementing factories and conducted after the Foundational Training. The first cohort of 65 women are trained exclusively by the Swasti team and the second cohort of 65 are trained by the respective factory teams (after completing the Training of Trainers)

Ayudha Pooja: An Indian festival, largely celebrated by Hindus in South India, which worships Implements, weapons and tools. It is part of the 9 days of the *Navaratri* or *Dushhera* period.

Bell Bajao: A Hindi phrase meaning “ring the bell”, and a campaign against domestic violence by Breakthrough, an Indian organization working to end violence against women. The cultural and media campaign urges local residents to take action against abuse through simple acts meant to interrupt domestic violence. More information at www.bellbajao.org

Capacity Building Officers: These are individuals who are part of the WiF team and organize and conduct the training sessions at the factory. One CBO is exclusively assigned for each factory that implements the WiF program.

Deepavali: An Indian festival, largely celebrated by Hindus, and popularly called the festival of lights. The festival signifies the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, good over evil, and hope over despair.

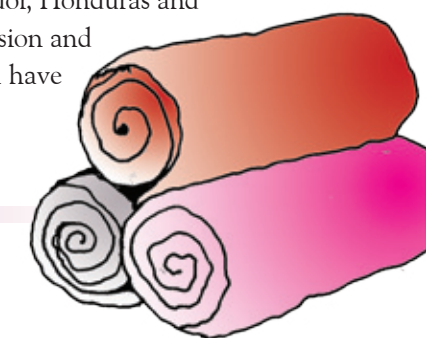
Foundational Training: This is one of the training components of the Women In Factories program that focuses on basic life skills, with a duration of 15 hours. This Foundational Training is organized for the total workforce of the factories (men and women) that have accepted the implementation of the WiF program.

Graduation Ceremony: A celebration is organized for those who successfully complete the Advanced Training and certificates are distributed.

Training of Trainers: Training of Trainers is organized to build the capacities of the selective management staff and women workers, both men and women to deliver the Foundational and Advanced trainings in their respective factories, to sustain the WiF program, post funding by the Walmart Foundation. The duration of this course is for 15 days, spread across 5 months, convened in three regions in the local vernacular languages – Tamil, Kannada and Hindi.

Walmart Foundation: Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts focused on sustainability, economic opportunity, and community. To learn more about Walmart’s giving, visit www.foundation.walmart.com

Women In Factories: The Walmart Foundation launched the Women in Factories program in 2011 to provide training to 60,000 women in 150 factories in India, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Honduras and China by the end of 2016. The program implementers are Swasti, CARE, World Vision and Business for Social Responsibility. As of December 2014 more than 40,000 women have received training.



Annexures

Annex 1 - List of factories in Phase I

No	Name of the Factory	District	Name of the State
1	Ramesh Flowers Pvt. Ltd.,(Gananpathy Godown)	Tuticorin	TAMIL NADU
2	Ramesh Flowers Pvt. Ltd. (Sipcot)	Tuticorin	TAMIL NADU
3	JVS Export	Karur	TAMIL NADU
4	Shakthi Knitting Ltd.	Tirupur	TAMIL NADU
5	Peacock Apparels	Tirupur	TAMIL NADU
6	First Steps Babywear Ltd., Unit - 4	Hosur	TAMIL NADU
7	First Steps Babywear Ltd., Unit -5	Hosur	TAMIL NADU
8	Textport Syndicate (I) Pvt Ltd.,- B2	Bangalore	KARNATAKA
9	Textport Syndicate (I) Pvt Ltd.,- B3F	Bangalore	KARNATAKA
10	Pointec Pens Energy Pvt Ltd	Bangalore	KARNATAKA
11	Shahi Exports Pvt Ltd. -27	Bhagalur	TAMIL NADU
12	Shahi Export Pvt Ltd. - 26	Maddur	KARNATAKA
13	Indian Designs Exports Pvt Ltd.,	Hosur	TAMILNADU
14	Welspun	Anjar	GUJARAT
15	Welspun	Vapi	GUJARAT



Annex 2 - Tool for collecting case studies

Case Study - Interview Guidelines

Women in Factories-WiF

Swasti, Bangalore

The discussion for the case study should be done with a participant of the women in Factory Program as per the guidance given in the sample matrix.

Introductory Statement – We are implementing the women in factory program with the support of Walmart Foundation and we are happy that you have actively participated in the life skills training program. As part of wider dissemination on the learnings and benefits of the program experienced by you and your factory we are bringing out a case study compendium - capturing stories of change experienced by women who have attended the training. We are here to learn about your experiences in this regard. The information will be used to help us get a better understanding of the programme achievements, results and challenges and share the same with government stakeholders, civil society organizations and other factories so that more women may be benefited from similar program. We need some time from you for this. We will take 45 – 60 minutes to complete the discussion. Any data collected during this interview will be completely confidential. If you choose, we will not use your name on any information sent out. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may choose not to answer any question or all questions. However your answers are important to us and we hope you will help us in this work.

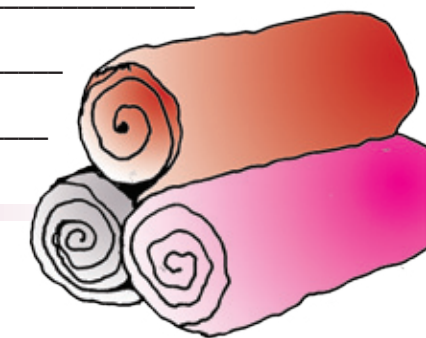
If you want to ask anything about the study, please ask me.

PLEASE LISTEN AND RESPOND TO THE QUESTIONS/ CONCERNS RAISED BY THE RESPONDENT AND ADDRESS THOSE.

Do you agree to participate? (√ one)	No * (If no Look for another worker)	Yes (If yes Proceed to interview)

** If 'No' to the above, please write down the reason below, and thank the respondent.*

Reason for not willing to participate



If 'Yes' to be above, please sign the following (Read and explain the consent form and request the participant of the study to sign the consent form. Ensure sufficient copies of the consent form):

Once the initial process completed start the interview and collect the information. Remember this is not a questionnaire but an interview guide. Ensure this tool is used appropriately in a conversation mode to get the best of information from the respondent and at the same time respecting the respondent's privacy and decision not to share certain information.

1. Profile

- a) Name:
- b) Sex:
- c) Age:
- d) Educational Level
- e) Factory Name :
- f) Designation
- g) Employment ID No:
- h) District:
- i) State:
- j) Total Years of Work Experience:
- k) Years of Experience in this factory :

2. Family History/Background:

(Childhood, hometown, Place of living (migrant) , Marital status, No of children, their education details etc..)

3. Training Completed (✓ tick)

- | | Month | / | Year |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| 1. Foundational Training <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | | _____ |
| 2. Advanced Training <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | | _____ |
| 3. Training of Trainers <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | | _____ |

4. Before training: (How would you describe yourself before you attended any of the WiF training session? Personal/Family/Work)

5. Post training- How would you describe yourself now?(Personal/Family/ At work)

Goals of their life? Workers attitude towards factory- ownership, concentration, work

etc. roles and responsibilities? How do you solve the conflict situation faced at home/ team members?

6. Skills acquired :

a. **Communication:** (Describe your overall experience of any change in the way you communicate with your supervisors, co-workers, family members or neighbors after attending the training. Probe Questions: Do you politely make demands or you think it is your right to shout? Can you give example of how you communicated earlier and now? How do you react when your supervisor or coworker is angry with you?)

b. **Leadership:** (Get information on whether she was involved in any leadership role prior to the training and did she take up any leadership role in the factory or part factory committees, in the community and at home after attending the training. Collect specific anecdotes and stories. Probe questions: Who decides on your children's education or on spending your money at home? At work place do you express your suggestions/ opinions? Do you make your daily plans at home or work? Can you share how you do it? Do you appreciate others for their good work? Have you been appreciated by your supervisor/ any other higher official? Do you believe in teamwork? How is your relationship with the team members?)

7. Knowledge gained: (Can you tell me one or two new knowledge/skills that you have learnt after attending the training in the following areas?)

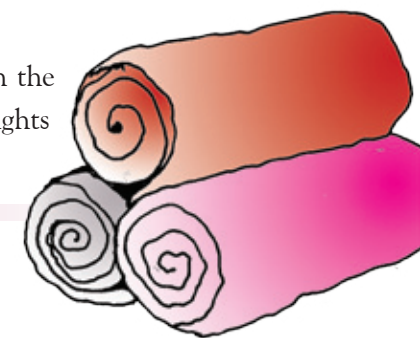
a) **Health:** (Probe questions related Menstrual hygiene, Nutrition, sanitation, safe drinking water, family planning methods, STD/HIV etc.) have you shared information on childbirth and pregnancy to any of your friend / family members or in your neighborhood.

b) **Gender:** (Do you get leisure time at home? Do you share house hold work with others at home? Is discrimination against girl child or women acceptable to you? Is there any improvement in family relationship -with your husband/ family members? How do you react when somebody in your neighborhood faces domestic Violence? When you face gender discrimination by your supervisor how do you react?)

c) **Stress Management:** How often you get angry? How do you react when somebody shouts at you? How do you manage your stress? Is there any change in your confidence level? How it is helpful to faces challenge in your life/ can you explain? Do you believe in Planning?

d) **Functional and Financial literacy** (Savings and Budget): What is your idea on savings? How much you have saved and where? How do you spend your money? Do you plan your budget with your husband? How often you take leave (before and after training)? Do you inform about your leave? If yes to whom?

e) **Women Right's – Domestic violence, Dowry etc.** (What is your opinion on the practice of dowry? Do you agree with that women should exercise her basic rights



Good Business, Doing Good

like deciding many things in her life- education, whom to marry, go or not go for work, how to spend the money earned, voting rights etc.? Have you contested in local elections? Are you part of anti sexual harassment committee in your factory? Do you come across any such cases in your factory? What did you do?)

8. Did you share any information with others (friends, family members and neighbors)? If yes to whom and on what? How has been your experience of sharing what you have learnt from the training with others, how did they receive you? Do they respect you more for sharing this knowledge? (share stories/anecdotes)
9. Which of the learning's you practice in life? (At Factory): (Usage of PPEs, keeping toilets and tables clean, Support other team members, punctual to work, complete the daily target, assertive communication , approaching supervisors for clarifying doubts etc..

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

At Home: (Sharing of household work, Non discrimination against girl child, Healthy food habits, assertive communication, change in decision making process - spending money, spending time with children and other family members etc.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

At Community level: (Other's perception or worker's perception, about his or her own interaction with the community? How is the relationship with neighbors now? Role played in SHGs, Parent Teachers Meetings, and Panchayat Institutions etc.? Queue at bus stops, ration shops, EB offices water sources? Access to services and sharing of information to others?

1. _____

2. _____

Feedback from

1. Management: Supervisor/HR or any other official:

Stories of change from the Women in Factories program, India

Annexures

2. Friends(co workers from factory or neighbors)

3. Family members (through home visits meet one or two family members and neighbors to get their observations recorded)

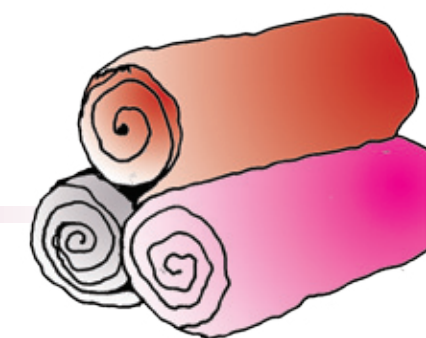
Date and time of Interview:

Signature of the Interviewee:

Mobile No:

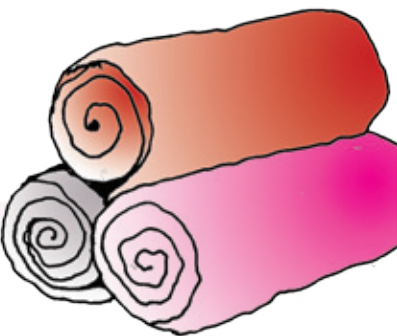
Name of the Interviewer:

Mobile No:



Annex 3 - Framework for collection of case studies

Worker Level			Factory Level
Personal Life of Worker	Community and Family	Professional Life of Worker	Management
Healthseeking behaviour	Sharing work burden at home and supporting family members	Decreased absenteeism	Promotion to workers with right skills and capacity
Stress management	Better relationship and communication with other family members	Career growth and promotion	Support in career progression of workers and provision of increment
Increased self confidence	Sharing learnings from life skill training with other community members in the neighbourhood	Improved productivity	Improved relationship and communication with workers
Improved behaviour - health seeking financial		Improved communication in workplace with management and co-workers	Improved communication
Gender balance		Improved discipline in workplace	Improved discipline in workplace
Children's health and education		Taking up higher responsibilities	Improved amenities and facilities for workers (toilet, dining facility, recreation etc.,)
Financial literacy		Positive attitude towards factory and ownership	Improved team work
		Improved teamwork	Improved retention
		Adherence to factory systems	Grievance redressal platform
			Adoption of Life Skills Training into regular training curriculum
			Openness to life skills program as an investment





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