

**Decent Employment for Women - Learnings and
recommendations from the pilot project**

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Institute of Social Studies Trust
Core 6A, UG Floor, India Habitat Centre
Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003

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Ratna M. Sudarshan
Director, ISST

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Decent Employment for Women - Learnings and recommendations from the pilot project

1. Introduction

This report documents the interventions undertaken so far under the ILO funded project to help poor women living in selected slum clusters in the cities of Bangalore and Delhi to acquire the skills and capacity to attain decent employment. Decent employment for women is employment that helps women empower themselves and take greater control of their lives. Since merely skills training is no guarantee in securing employment there has been particular attention to selecting marketable skills and in ensuring that women are able to apply these skills in practice. It has also been a concern of the project to try and address issues such as child care, limited mobility, illiteracy and lack of awareness related to new technologies that prevent women from accessing opportunities and improving their situation.

The pilot project was started in 2001 and has been under way for 2 years. It has been implemented in partnership with NGOs in Delhi and Bangalore. The progress to date is as follows:

In Delhi and Bangalore a total of 1,600 women have been trained, in Delhi, 780 women have completed training so far, while 405 women are still in the process of undergoing training. In Bangalore, a little over 300 women have been trained so far, while 80 are still in the process of undergoing training. Of those trained, a significant percentage is already earning some livelihood from their newly acquired skills. In terms of success or failure in Delhi, the most marketable skill would appear to be that of 'textiles/garment construction'. The skill requires some level of literacy however in the absence of it the trainers have devised methods that support women's capacities. The other seems to be 'handwork and embroidery', which is primarily home-based, has a ready market, and however does not allow for employment opportunities outside home. In terms of a success or failure in Bangalore, the most marketable skill would appear to be that of housekeeping and catering which do not require literacy and electric wiring which while non traditional is nevertheless both accessible for women and has a ready market.

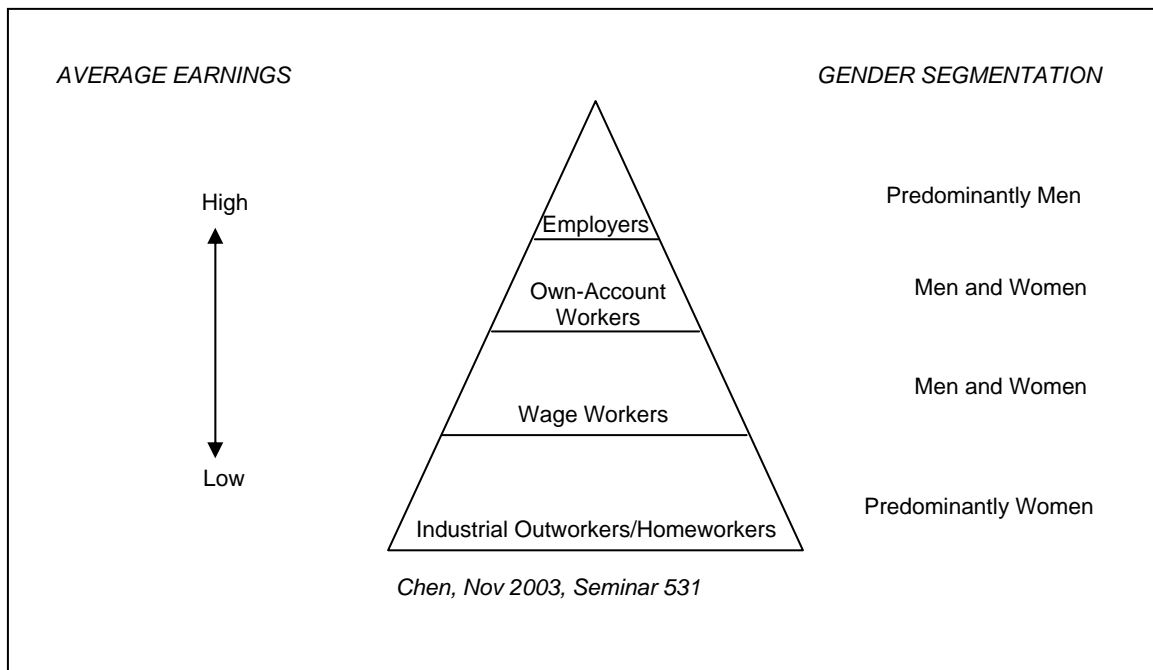
ILO's inputs into this project have been substantial at every stage from conception and design to implementation and follow up. Special attention has been paid to the selection of skills and trades with a view to ensuring viability primarily, but also to breaking traditional gender barriers. This has been done through an interactive process with partner NGOs, as well as with women from the slums to assess their felt needs. Since the project has been a pilot there has been particular attention given to reviewing and learning while implementing, to ensure flexibility and appropriateness. ILO Project staff has facilitated contacts between the partner NGOs, training institutes and potential markets. Networking between the NGOs has also been encouraged and enabled by the project process. Overall there has been a capacity enhancement of partner NGOs.

A description of partner NGOs and their experience to date as well as the perspective of a sample of participants is provided in Section 5 while Section 2 gives a brief insight into the status of women in the informal sector while Section 3 gives a brief description of the urban informal economy as a background to the project. Section 4 provides a brief account of the community based activities organised by the partner NGOs. Section 6 looks at some of the government training facilities and the potential for their involvement in providing skills training. The Lessons learnt (both positive and negative) and recommendations are detailed in Section 7.

The methods used in this study have included direct observation, participatory discussions and in depth interviews with partner NGO staff, including field staff with direct involvement in the project, as well as with women participants. Existing documentation has been used to supplement first hand observation and the experience as gathered from partner staff. A draft report has been shared with partner NGOs to ensure accuracy. The learnings and recommendations are also largely culled from their experience and knowledge. The overall attempt has been to let the project and those involved speak for themselves.

2. Gender in the Informal Sector

Informal work, gender and poverty tend to overlap. There are various segments in the informal work sector categorised by the employment status. On the top there are the employers- the most visible sector and at the bottom, the least visible and the least understood are the industrial home workers. There are two stylised global facts that emerge with respect to links between informal work, gender and poverty. The first that men tend to be overrepresented in the top segment, while women tend to be over represented in the bottom segment, while both enjoy more or less equal representation in the middle segment. The second is that the average income declines as one moves down the three segments. Therefore, women tend to earn much less even within specific segments of the informal economy due to gender differences in wages, and earnings based on the type of work and the volume of the produce. As result there occurs a huge gender gap in the informal economy with women earning less than the average than men (Chen 2003).



3. A Profile of the Urban Informal Economy of Slum Clusters in Delhi and Bangalore

Delhi and Bangalore are both growing cities, attracting migrants in search of economic opportunity, especially from surrounding areas, and the urban informal economy of the slum clusters¹ are an intrinsic part of the complex economic structure of both cities. Although levels of education are low, and illiteracy high, there is evidence of entrepreneurship in the struggle for survival. Although both men and women are mainly engaged in low skill and manual work, the women in particular are concentrated into a narrow range of occupations, often home based. A brief profile of the urban informal economy of slums in the two cities is presented below.

Delhi

According to the 2001 Census, the population of Delhi was 13.8 million. High levels of in-migration have contributed to the growth of the city, with the net migration during the decade 1991-2001 estimated at 1.6 million (compared to 0.6 million during 1961-71). The lower income migrants are distributed all over the city in the numerous slum clusters. Many slum clusters are small, and an estimated 75% have less than 500 households each.² The usual pattern is for the first residents to set up '*jhuggies*'³ on barren land close to their place of work. The usual pattern is also for men to come first, and for families to follow in due course. (While imbalance in the sex ratio of adults is influenced by the gendered pattern of migration, the imbalance in the sex ratio of the 0-6 age group is more indicative of gender bias. While for India as a whole sex ratio for the age group 0-6 stood at 927 in 2001, that for Delhi was as low as 865).⁴

With the support and influence of political leaders several of these habitations have acquired a degree of permanence even though they usually lack clear legal status. In fact, there are seven categories of slum clusters and the level of facilities provided to these by municipal authorities varies according to category.⁵ A common practice is for each cluster to elect a representative, the '*pradhan*', who plays the important role of mediating between the slum residents and outside

¹ In India, slum areas have been defined under Section 3 of the Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1956, as areas which are for reasons of poor quality of housing, sanitation and absence or near-absence of other infrastructural facilities, are deemed 'unfit for human habitation'.

² MCD data, cited in Dhar Charabarti.

³ Or temporary shelters

⁴ www.censusindia.net

⁵ There are seven types of slums: Legally notified Slum Areas; Jhuggi-Jhompri Clusters (JJ Clusters); Unauthorised Colonies and Harijan Bastis; Urban villages; Pavement Dwellers; Resettlement Colonies; Regularised Unauthorised Colonies

authorities. Some communities are multi-ethnic and lacking any other clear bonding, although there may be groups of families from the same village living together. But interdependence, living in such close proximity to one another is naturally high. Systems of management – very importantly, of ownership and sale of property - have thus developed in these areas. Even though there is no legal title to land, ‘ownership’ or sale is respected by the residents. Instances of one household assisting another, with food or money, are also common.

The main source of income is manual work of one kind or another. Initially the men and some women were engaged in construction work. Over the years they have diversified into other activities, but remain largely casual workers. A recent survey of 30 slum clusters and 802 households in Delhi (see *Mitra* 2003) showed that construction and manufacturing account for more than 30% of total workers in these areas. The largest proportion of the illiterate workers is in construction, followed by personal services. More than 75% of the workers were found to be in casual employment. Some occupations, for example trading, are dominated by self-employed workers. Sales jobs generate both casual and self-employment. Construction offers regular jobs (this appears to be mainly because of the dominance of a system of contract labour, so that groups are hired for longer periods to enable the completion of building contracts). In casual jobs, the average earnings of women are almost half of that of males. While male workers are more or less evenly distributed across the 3 employment categories, a large majority of women (more than 70%) are engaged in casual employment. This could be due to the flexibility that such jobs offer in terms of working hours or there could be barriers to entry with other types of employment. The average male income is higher than that of females, for all the 3 employment categories.

While for Delhi as a whole, over 87% of males and 75% of females are literate, in the slum areas levels of literacy are much lower. According to one estimate, 40% of all workers and 65 % of women are illiterate. Only 3% of women have acquired education above the secondary level (see *Mitra* 2003). In general, despite the prevalence of poor health and infrastructure, slum residents have greater access to both schooling and health facilities, and the availability of work, than at their point of origin.

Bangalore

The population of Bangalore according to Census 2001 is 6.52 million. It is the fourth most populous city in India, after *Mumbai*, *Delhi* and *Kolkata*. Estimates of the number of slums and the slum population varies between 20-25% of the city’s total population. Others suggest that if

the non-slum poor are included, more than 40% of the city's population would be defined as poor (Benjamin 2000).

The literacy rate for the city as a whole in 2001 stood at 88.36 % for males and 78.98 % for females. Among the slum population, it was estimated that around 49% were illiterate in 1992. As far as activities and occupations are concerned, around 38% of the slum workers were found to be construction and coolie workers; followed by 19 % who were service workers, including domestic servants. The mean monthly slum income was found to be Rs 1325 in 1992. Very few individual households had water supply, toilets and electricity; 25 % of the slums lacked water supply, over 70 % lacked toilets (*Ramachandran and Subramaniam 2001*).

It is estimated that 'half the city's households shared less than one-quarter of total income'. While little data is available on the economy of the poor in the city, from various studies it can be concluded that trade, commerce, domestic service and unregistered manufacturing are the main sectors providing employment and income to the poor. One set of activities helps to generate another. For example, *Azad Nagar* in West Bangalore has several activities – an extensive recycling industry, weaving, automobile cluster, home based activities etc. About a third of the activities are home based. In turn these have stimulated the growth of small shops – bakery, tea shops, small food stalls, provision stores, etc. Thus, Benjamin notes that:

'The poorest with no skills depend on rag picking, coolie employment in the different shops and garages, home based activities such as *agarbathi* and *beedi* rolling. The established poor find a niche in the different trading and service sector. A section of poor households, with contacts with waste traders, enter into itinerant trading. The *autorickshaw* and matador drivers considered being upwardly mobile groups among the poor.....the vibrant local economy has to be seen in an evolutionary and systematic perspective'. (Benjamin and *Bhuvaneshwari 2001*: p. 51)

Women's Work

It emerges from the above that the women to whom the programme is especially addressed have, in general, high levels of illiteracy; acquired skills of care and nurture, but little experience with work outside the home; limited participation in economic or political activity within the community, in other words, of organizing.

4. Community Based Activities

All partner NGOs under the vocational training programme have conducted several community based activities; a few in collaboration with ILO and other implementing partners and with other organisations. A majority of these have been specific to mobilisation, non-formal education, awareness generation and providing support services, which have been a crucial aspect of the training and post training period. A few of these are listed below:

Mobilisation/Motivation

- ♦ Mainly the mobilisation efforts on behalf of partner NGOs within the Community have been achieved through door-to door visits and mass meetings. Utilisation of innovative ideas for mobilisation and motivation through the medium of Puppet shows and *nukad sabhas* (street meetings) have also been incorporated.
- ♦ The Community mobilisation has also occurred through innovative means such as inviting women to judge for themselves whether or not the conditions under which training will be provided is feasible or not.
- ♦ Another original measure in the same area has been involving the power/authority figures from within the community (such as the elected heads of the communities- '*Pradhans*') to remove any possibility of doubt or scepticism with respect to providing training in areas away from the community.
- ♦ Literacy classes have been conducted as the target group consists of primarily illiterate women, signing their own names and learning counting have been the major points of focus of this activity as these have direct impact of the skill development process.

Support Services

- ♦ Support services have been made available to women addressing their primary need for childcare. All NGOs have set up crèches these are managed by women from the community itself.
- ♦ Different NGOs have implemented their crèche facilities according to their capabilities. All partner NGOs provide nutritional supplements such as milk, fruits, biscuits, boiled *channa* (gram) to children coming to the crèche. One of the partner NGO has set up a primary school for the local community children, here

women trainees can enrol their children, ensuring the safety of their children while they are undergoing training.

Life Skills Development

- ♦ Complimenting vocational training are the life skill development activities. Women are provided free medical aid and health check-ups. Information dissemination about health, hygiene and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and STDs, workshops on constitutional rights and rights at the workplace form an essential part of life skills development which is crucial to the overall development of the woman and a basic premise of the training programme.
- ♦ Legal literacy is another important feature of the life skill development activities, partner NGOs have collaborated with independent legal advisors, other NGOs dealing with legal issues with a specific reference to women and with other lawyers to bridge the information gap with respect to legal problems and issues.

Other capacity building activities

- ♦ Government agencies functioning primarily as implementing partners in the programme along with partner NGOs have also conducted need assessment and model training workshops to further aid the skill development process and. This has also aided partner NGOs to keep the women motivated.
- ♦ The development of Self Help Groups is a feature that has become synonymous with all partner NGOs. Women are encouraged to save as much as they can and as frequently as possible. These SHGs have accounts in banks and are gradually leading to increase in individual savings allowing uneducated women to achieve some level of security.

5. Project Experience and Learnings

Bangalore

- **Goodwill International Association**

The Institute is 33 years old and has long experience in providing non formal and formal training to poor and vulnerable youth. Goodwill has considerable technical expertise available in-house and follows a business like approach to ensuring that trainees are able to use their skills. There is also experience with training women in non traditional areas such as carpentry, welding and fabrication. Under the vocational training programme, so far women have been trained in brick making (a few left as they shifted residence) and women are currently being trained in electrical wiring. While the women learning wiring have some level of education those doing brick making are illiterate. The groups that have completed the latter course have already had some success in marketing their wares (pots and planters) in the residential areas adjacent to the training centre and their plan is to form a self help group which will purchase a cart with money saved by members which they can use to market their products. The women doing wiring have varying plans. Some would like to work from home selling their products and services within their own locality, while others plan to work with their husbands who are employed in the building or electrical trade. Because of their in house technical expertise the institute is able to provide back up and support to the trainees as well as the confidence that they will be assisted to form self help groups where helpful and access other support where available under government schemes and from NGOs. There is also a stress in helping women acquire multiple skills so that they can avail of different avenues of work, as they are available.

Shankaramma is 32 years old and lives in JPN Nagar. She is illiterate and after her first husband died leaving her with 3 children, she was fortunate enough to find a second husband with whom she had another child. However the marriage did not work out as the second husband resented the other children. *Shankaramma* would like to leave her husband if it were not for the child she fears she will have to leave behind. With the brick making training provided by Goodwill she hopes that she will be able to earn some money to look after her children since what her husband provides is inadequate. *Shankaramma* is part of a self-help group in which members contributed monthly to save up to buy a cart to transport and sell their wares.

Mamta is unmarried and has studied up to 8th standard. She lives in JPN Nagar and is one among three children. Her father makes a living selling tender coconuts but his earnings are meager and he spends out of it on alcohol. Her mother does domestic work but this is still not enough to feed the family. *Mamta* could not complete her education because there was no money for textbooks and uniform. After learning brick making at Goodwill she hopes to be able to earn some money. She will probably get married in a few years but now she is eager to learn new designs and earn as much as she can. *Mamta* is also a member of the same self-help group as *Shankaramma*.

Gowri is 26 years old and lives in *Ambedkar Nagar*. She and her sister are both married to the same husband but it is an amicable arrangement. Her sister brought her from her home to look after her. *Shanti* has three children and *Gowri* has two. The husband and *Shanti* work in the building trade. *Gowri* is literate and until now she was looking after the children. But now she wants to earn money and after learning electric wiring at Goodwill she hopes to be able to help her husband. *Gowri* and other women in the group learning electric wiring have been helped to get loans from *Sanghamitra* an NGO providing funding to poor women.

Suvarna is 27 years old and she also wants to help her husband after completing her training in electric wiring at Goodwill. She had a love marriage and moved with her husband to the city. *Suvarna* is literate and she worked for a while before marriage in a shop. She has a one-year-old child and was doing domestic work before her husband saw the Goodwill board and encouraged her to take up training. She learnt tailoring as have many other trainees and is able to make simple garments. She is keen on learning electric wiring because she can then work with her husband. She leaves her child in the local *Anganwadi* while she is at the training centre. She has already earned some 250 Rs. fixing 2 fans and a tube light in the neighbourhood.

- ***Parinati***

Parinati is working with tribal and non-tribals in *Bandipur*, as well as with child labourers and women in *Jigani* and *Chennapatana*. For *Parinati* this has been the first experience of providing vocational training to women in the slum areas of Bangalore city and there are currently 65 women undergoing training in a variety of trades/crafts including plumbing, horticulture, corporate housekeeping, coconut craft and vermiculture. The training includes both classroom lecture and on site training provided in their own premises. They have accessed various training resources both government (Coconut Development Board and the Government Horticulture Department) and private (Goodwill Training Institute for plumbing). *Parinati's* experience to date is that it has been very rewarding to be able to provide poor and vulnerable women with opportunities to enhance both their life skills and earning potential. While selecting the trades and crafts there has been an effort to look at the outcome in terms of ensuring that the trained women will be able to find work or a market for their products. While plumbing is a non-traditional skill it has high demand and the challenge will be to place women either in small shops or to help them provide services in commercial and residential buildings. Those doing horticulture and vermiculture could find work in government nurseries or, in the case of horticulture companies that are responsible for maintaining the green islands at traffic intersections could provide them with work. There is a clear focus on ensuring that the training skills are applied. And that with the experience thus gained more women could be trained either in these same skills or additional ones too. Some of the other skills/trades *Parinati* are interested in looking at in the future include

garment making using power machines which would enable women to find employment in garment factories and making of electronic components.

Guna is only 18 years old and lives in *Koramangala*. She could not go to school, as she had to look after her younger siblings. She was married off at a young age and deserted by her husband. She has a one year old child and although she lives with her parents the situation is difficult and her father tends to blame her for what is no fault of her own as she had little choice in her marriage, and her husband left her for no fault of her own. She has already once attempted to take her life by pouring kerosene over herself. Fortunately she did not go so far as to actually go through with it but the experience has left deep scars on her and she rarely smiles. For her the plumbing training provided by *Parinati* is not only a means to acquire skills that will help her earn a livelihood, but also to regain her dignity and self-confidence. The members of the training group are like a support group for her and. In fact she was brought into the training by some of the other members who wanted to help her. For *Guna* the training is one way for her to go forward in a situation where she once felt hopeless.

Deviamma is 38 and lives in *Gauripalya*. She has single-handedly brought up a son and a daughter eking out a precarious living while dealing with an alcoholic husband who was also suffering from TB. She has never worked outside her home before and when her husband died recently she was in difficult straits. *Deviamma* travels an hour by bus to attend the training. Like the other women attending the plumbing training course provided by *Parinati* she herself has chosen to learn this non-traditional skill even though she is worried that she may not get work after the training. Other women in her group are less worried and reassure her that they will get help from *Parinati* in doing so.

- ***Karnataka Kolageri Nivasigala Samyukta Sangatane (KKNSS)***

KKNSS is a statewide federation of slum dwellers. It has been at the vanguard of efforts to change existing policies and legislation and create new ones that are in favour of slum dwellers. KKNSS has been working to raise awareness and mobilise slum dwellers, especially women, to claim their rights from the state and their political representatives. Apart from this their aim is to help people access government programmes and schemes more effectively. There are not many training opportunities for people in the slums and this project has provided an opening for many women in the slums who are construction workers, and are interested in learning masonry skills. There has, however, been resistance and scepticism from male members of their households as well as from those in the construction trade, but despite that 50 women from different slum areas have successfully completed the training. At least two thirds are illiterate but the training syllabus has been tailored so that even technical details can be suitably adapted. Masonry is a non-traditional area for women workers and while hard physical labour is certainly not beyond the scope of their potential other issues such as security and hostility from contractors have to be addressed. This is being done through forming self-help groups and helping the groups' link with

contractors/employers who will not exploit them. The major challenges facing KKNSS are to help women break through in a field which is traditionally male dominated and where, although there is some support from government, the policies and practices are such that they militate against women being given equal opportunities or wages. The livelihood risk for the women is considerable but at the same time it is not that they are unwilling to try if given some support.

- ***Janodaya Trust***

Janodaya, which means “People’s Awakening” was formed in 1987, with a mission to promote justice, economic and political freedom, gender equity and greater dignity and respect for women. *Janodaya* works in rural and urban Karnataka and seeks to promote empowerment, of women and children particularly, through multiple activities including formation of self-help groups, promotion of savings and increased access to credit, support for non-formal and formal education, and legal and counseling services. *Janodaya* is also involved in vocational skills training, placement and employment promotion. Under the vocational training programme, 230 women have been trained in various skills including cooking, catering and housekeeping, herbal beauty care , horticulture and urban gardening, city taxi driving. These trades/skills have been chosen keeping in view women’s requirements and interests, market demand as well as their potential in terms of bringing women into more nontraditional areas, such as taxi driving. In terms of their employment potential the results have been mixed, in some cases because of changes in market conditions themselves. For instance while the training programme on taxi driving has been highly successful, participants are finding it difficult to get employed in the taxi services because they are now being required to provide their own vehicle which requires a considerable investment. Despite this several women have taken the initiative, with support from *Janodaya* to acquire a vehicle, while the rest are still trying. The women have formed a self-help group and are gathering savings as well as evolving plans on how they can earn more money by collectively managing and operating a vehicle provided by *Janodaya*. In the case of domestic housekeeping most women are able to find employment and the training has helped them upgrade their basic skills so that their capacity to both negotiate and earn higher salaries is greater. This is one of the major outcomes of the training programme that it has given women the self-confidence to feel that they are skilled and empowered to ask for more. Many are able to earn Rs.1000 or more. A few have been chosen to start small catering ventures in their own homes and although the earnings may be lower, there are also earnings in kind in terms of better food for the children and being able to work from the home. Some of the ideas that the women would like to develop are to take on catering for various events and *Janodaya* is trying to help them develop the network and contacts for this. The herbal beauty training has been very successful and interestingly

women have found that rather than working in beauty parlours, there is greater demand for providing services at home and sale of herbal products. In all cases the women have formed into self help groups with savings and this serves as a support group. *Janodaya* staff in turn supports them. The challenge in the future will be to help the women access more opportunities. Some of the new skills *Janodaya* are interested in taking up based on market demand and women's needs include pottery, candle and soap/detergent making, geriatric and childcare and advanced tailoring and embroidery.

The *Shakti Mahila Swasahaya Sangha*, which is one of the self-help groups of the domestic housekeeping trainees, has 15 members who have collected Rs.4000, each contributing Rs.20 monthly. Two members are running small eating establishments from their homes earning around Rs. 600-800 after deducting costs, to which must be added the food they are able to provide to their children. Others are working as full time or part time domestic workers depending upon their need and requirement. *Yashoda* who is 28 years old and married at 18, earns around Rs.1100. her cooking skills have been greatly enhanced by the training and this has helped her get a higher salary.

Yashoda's husband is a construction worker and her earnings serve to supplement the family income. *Kokila* who is 25 years old was also married at 18 and she has 4 children, the youngest of whom is 7 years old. *Kokila's* husband is a cobbler and spends much of his earnings on alcohol. The training has helped *Kokila* increase her monthly earnings by around Rs. 200. While this may not be a huge sum, it is still significant and the training has resulted in increasing her market potential and well as confidence.

- **Association of People with Disability (APD)**

APD was founded 44 years ago with a view to providing employment opportunities to people with disabilities. This in turn resulted in their addressing issues relating to mobility, providing quality education and a host of other activities. APD provides technical education for disabled people in its Industrial Training Centre and has also created various self-employment groups which function as cooperative ancillary units providing inputs to companies such as MICO and ITI. Apart from this, through its community outreach programme APD is also concerned with the problems of disability, which includes working with families of disabled people as well as with other poor and vulnerable families. While APD is involved with training, placement and career guidance and counseling specifically for disabled persons, their interventions at the community level are largely focused on family awareness, including health and nutrition inputs, as well as formation of women's self help groups, supporting them to create and manage revolving funds. APD has long experience with vocational training and placement and under this project they have been able to extend that to poor women in the community at large in 6 slum clusters out of the 20

in which they work. Women have been trained in domestic housekeeping and electronics. Of the former, three did not complete their training while a majority of the remaining has found employment earning around Rs 1000 per month. The rest are being given additional training to do commercial housekeeping since the area in which they live has more businesses than residences and they prefer to find work close to home because of their domestic responsibilities, especially child care. Of those who have completed the electronics training 8 have been placed while 2 are still completing the training. The women who have received training have become role models in their community and many more have been coming forward to ask for training. This in itself is a major achievement as it is difficult for women to break through the barriers of mobility and negative attitudes from their husbands and other household members. Apart from the training under the vocational training programme, motivating women and helping them build their self confidence is an on going process, as is placement and providing them with support to make the best possible use of the training.

Mubeen Taj is 28 years old, a Hindu by birth who married a Muslim of her own choice when she was around 17 years old. She lives in *Bagalur*. Her husband buys and sells steel scrap bringing in around Rs. 100-200 a week. He spends the rest on alcohol. They have five children, four boys and one girl. The older two boys are working and earning around Rs. 75-100 per week. *Mubeen Taj* studied up to the 9th standard. Her husband does not want her to leave the house but agreed to let her attend the APD training programme. She completed two months but meanwhile her second son fell ill. APD provided her support and today he is better and she is determined to return and finish the training programme. Apart from the training itself which provides *Mubeen* with an opportunity to earn and supplement the meager family income, the counseling and support she has received has been of equal importance in helping her realise that she has the capacity to improve her own situation.

Uma is 21 years old and has completed her SSLC. She lives with her family in *Gauripalya*. She has three younger brothers and her father is a plumber but his earnings are insufficient to support the family. Her mother used to work in a garment factory but gave it up after suffering health problems. *Uma* liked the training very much and she enjoys her work making electronic components in the APD centre in *Banaswadi*. She gets Rs, 1200 a month. The initial adjustment process has taken a little while since this is her first experience of working outside her home and gaining independence but she has now settled down and is happy.

Delhi

- ***Disha***

Disha has been involved in socio-economic development of underprivileged sections of the urban and rural community in the northern states of *Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana* and Delhi. The organisation has been working in Delhi for the past 13 years. The organisation has extensive experience in establishing SHGs, micro financing, micro enterprise development, providing innovative vocational skills and training of trainers. Under the vocational training programme, which began in June 2002, so far 100 women have been trained and 45 are under training in seven trades: beauty culture, hand and machine knitting, grinding of ophthalmic lens, making of surgical bandages, household linen, assembling electronic transformers and bakery food preservation. In terms of transferability of skill some degree of transferability exists. For example, women under training in assembling electric transformers can also make one component- IFT chokes, which are used in radios as it follows the same winding principle. Once the women have practiced this winding principle they can find work in factories that manufacture the IFT chokes. The education level of the trainees is mainly that of semi-literates. Many of the women have studied up to the eighth standard. There are a few who have completed high school while others are illiterate having learnt to write their names and counting numbers which is necessary for trades they are learning.

In one of its focus areas *Disha* is making provisions to handle a local demand for the surgical bandages- a large number of RMPs (registered medical practitioners), in the Mayapuri area have expressed a need to outsource wound dressing material. After completing training in this particular trade in November 2002, women remained unemployed. With the help of its partner ILO and government agencies *Disha* has recently obtained a licence for manufacture of surgical bandages keeping in mind this need of the RMPs. A large majority of the trainees from the first phase of the program have found employment and are regularly receiving work. These women are earning a monthly income of 1,000 – 1,500 rupees. Self help groups of about 20-30 women have been made for each trade. The organisation has been successful in enabling the Self Help Groups to open savings accounts in Bank of India under the name of *Mahila Vikas Kosh*. Women save Rs. 50-100 every month. One member has managed to save Rs. 4,000. Women can receive loans from this collective saving with a one rupee interest payment which is added to their savings. *Disha* has provided the women with pass books which are updated every month and after every withdrawal.

Humaira lives in *Khazan basti*. She is 30 years old, has seven children and has had the opportunity to study up to the Xth standard. She migrated from a small village in *Bihar* fifteen years ago. She is also the POC – Point of Contact for condom users for *Disha*. When DISHA told her about the skill training program she readily registered herself. She completed her training in making transformers and audio speakers. After her training *Humaira* was involved with separating two different types of stencils used in making transformers, she was earning Rs. 1,200 per month. She continued this work for about two months. Currently *Humaira*, is earning Rs. 1,000-1,500 per month, for cutting thread from embroidered pieces of cloth.

Halki bai lives in *Khazan basti*. She is 27 years old, has four children. She has not had an opportunity to receive education. *Halki bai* migrated from her native village in *Uttar Pradesh* about five years ago. She was motivated to get herself enrolled in *Disha's* household linen training program. She had no previous exposure to sewing but now she has acquired a sewing machine and works out of her home.

Prema lives in *Khazan basti*. She is 28 years old and has three children. She is not educated but is confident that with practice she can learn to read and write. She enrolled for *Disha's* household linen program, with the aim to enable herself to supplement her family income. She feels happy that she has acquired a skill that is bringing in some money; she says it's better than simply sitting home and doing household work and nothing else.

- ***Streebal***

Streebal began its work under a tree for 'the betterment of the unfortunate in our midst' in 1972 and was registered in 1975. The organisation's prime concern is "to awaken women to the power of their strength as a force for the betterment of society." The organisation works in a large area in south district of Delhi. *Streebal* is a designated Pulse Polio Centre. It runs a pre-school for children aged 3-6, adult literacy classes, provides pre-natal care, family planning, out patient medical aid to women, children and men alongside providing vocational training and skill development for girls/women. This activity is supported by a production centre for tailoring/embroidery skills with marketing arrangements at and through *Streebal*.

Under the vocational training programme, which began in June 2002, so far, 185 beneficiaries have been trained between 2002-2003 in four trades of Cutting/tailoring, Beauty culture, Cooking/Catering and Handicraft. The training process followed is aimed at developing differentiated specialised skills. Here different components of one trade are developed individually as one separate skill. This provides the organisation more time and resources to develop the women's abilities better. Following this methodology they have been able to enrol an adequate number of trainees per skill enabling them to impart training in a more organised manner. After four months an income generation focus is provided to the training. Women are given a portion of the sale from the products they make for simple odd jobs that the production centre set up by the organisation offers these women; by the end of six months the women are

confident and experts in the acquired skill. For instance the trainees receive returns while training for activities like stitching children's *kurta* and embroidery, for making paper shopping bags etc. Usually, the organisation pays the women according to the price of the piece which depends on the cloth used and the price it was purchased on. They make just enough to break even so the women do enjoy a significant earning opportunity.

Sunita lives in *Indira* camp. She has completed her education up to the ninth standard. Her family migrated to Delhi from Assam. She manages to earn about Rs. 700-1000 in a month. *Sunita* is a good/ardent learner. She won a sewing machine as a prize for her diligence and hard work. After coming to the training centre she has managed to stand on her own feet. She says that she does not like to go back home after training, she likes spending as much time as she can at the training centre. *Sunita's* husband used to beat her up. Since she has started to supplement the family's income and does not need him to give her money to run the house, he has stopped beating her up. She feels she has been empowered; she feels that she can now stand her ground and her husband knows she no longer has to depend on him.

Niranjana is also another successful working woman. She joined *Balloons* as a cloth checker with a starting salary of Rs. 2000 a month. The branch office where *Niranjana* was working is located close to *Streebal* office/training centre. However, it was not possible to meet her as she has been transferred to another branch office.

Rani lives in *Ansari Nagar*. She is 22 years old and is presently studying to give her tenth exams. *Rani* completed her training in beauty culture. After her training she started work, conducting house visits. She managed to earn Rs. 500 for a body massage. She wants to finish her tenth and become a teacher. She wants an opportunity to teach somebody like she was taught. There was an offer for marriage but she refused because the groom was unemployed. She explained to her parents that if she did not make provisions to secure her future, she would fall and hit the ground really hard if he decided to leave her. She views her job and her opportunity to study as stairs that ensure security, when she marries and he leaves her, she says she can then rely on these stairs to break her fall. *Rani* has also applied in a MCD hospital as a receptionist and is on their survey team to encourage women to conduct deliveries in hospitals. She says she has not started regular work here so she is not getting paid yet but is confident that soon this will materialise.

- ***Jan Shikshan Sansthan- Prayas***

Prayas began work in 1988 with 25 children who were victims of a devastating fire in *Jahangirpuri*, North Delhi. Today, *Prayas* is working with and for thousands of hapless and destitute children besides the marginalised youth and women in slum communities all over Delhi. Primarily as a shelter home, *Prayas* centres also provide non-formal education, vocational training, food, clothing, care and protection. For about a decade *Prayas* has been collaborating with Delhi Police, Delhi School of Social Work, *Shramik Vidya Peeth* (Ministry of HRD) and Directorate of Tech. Education (Govt. of Delhi) in creating multiple vocational training programmes as one of its primary rehabilitative strategies.

Under the vocational training programme, which began in September 2003, 165 women are currently undergoing training in seven trades with one trade yet to be implemented – Bakery, garment construction, soft toy making, beauty culture, domestic attendant, hospital attendant and Car driving and maintenance.

There are 31 self help groups in total out of which 12 SHGs are of the women trainees under ILO. Each SHG has 20 women. These women members have accounts in the State Bank of India and save Rs. 100- 50 a month. The women trainees at *Prayas* have completed their tenth; a few are semi-literate having completed their eight standard. However, these women are taught basic counting and signing their names alongside skill training and development. Since the project was undertaken in September 2003, the women have not yet begun to generate income through their training.

Prayas is a well networked and well established organisation. It has an independent job placement cell, and a marketing department that caters to post training necessities. With the help of HPS Foundation and *Bodh Raj* Foundation a job placement cell was set up in *Tuglakabad*. To date 2035 profiles have been receive and 1983 have been sent to organisations for a job. 352 students have been placed in wage employment and 1204 in self-employment ventures. The marketing department has three senior marketing managers involved in developing linkages to support the organisations post training activities. The organisation first enrolls beneficiaries in NFE classes, then motivates the beneficiaries to join Vocational Training, after which, they go through an orientation program at the job placement cell and coupled with the efforts of the marketing departments take up jobs that provide them with a substantial starting income. Excursion trips have been organised to Social Development Fairs, *Suraj Kund Crafts Mela*, and emporiums in *Connaught Place* to generate an awareness of the market among the beneficiaries. To provide self entrepreneurship *JSS-Prayas* has been successful in organising preliminary marketing training for the products prepared.

- ***Prayatn***

Prayatn has been working for 11 years helping people help themselves by improving the quality of life of the disadvantaged sections of our society. Integrated community development programmes, interventions in the area of healthcare development, education and life skill development are its main focus areas. It runs a school for slow learners to integrate them into MCD schools. It also operates a Crisis Intervention Centre for Rape victims in collaboration with Dept. of Child Welfare and Central Social Welfare Board since January 2000.

Under the vocational training programme, which began in June 2002, 150 women have been trained in four trades- Food Preservation, Cutting/tailoring, Beauty culture and Cooking/Catering. Another 50 women are still under training in the four trades and one additional trade of handwork/embroidery. Most of the women are semi-literate having studied up to the 5th or the 8th standard. They can sign their names and have learned to count after joining the training programme.

According to the programme coordinators amongst the three trades of beauty culture, cutting/tailoring and cooking/catering out of a 150 women trained from May 2002 – July 2003 about 55 per cent women have found work from *Sanjay Colony*.

Another 12 cutting/tailoring trainees from *Madanpur Kahadar* are employed with export houses earning about Rs. 1,800-2,500 a month. 8 women are regularly getting work from export houses at home earning 1,000-15,000 rupees. An independent contractor Ms.*Sharma* has been contacted; the organisation receives thread cutting, sequencing, and needle work from her. The women receive Rs. 3 and 50 paisa per piece, while 50 paisa per piece is kept by the lady. At the moment *Prayatn* is providing the transport charges for bringing in and taking back the work; details of bringing work and taking back finished pieces in a cost effective manner are yet to be worked out. A few beauty culture trainees are self-employed earning between Rs. 400-700 a month.

17 women from food preservation have been employed out of which 3 are running their own stalls, earning about 1,800 rupees. 2 women were employed with *Nafed*, 3 with *Haldiram* and 2 with *Nathu* sweets. A group of 10 women have formed a community kitchen; and are engaged in supplying cooked meals in tiffins in the *Sanjay Colony* area, earning about Rs. 100-150 per head. Weekly meetings were organised to motivate women to form self help groups, 25 agreed to form SHG after they were employed. Talks are under way for obtaining entrepreneurship loans from *Uniti Foundation*.

Gyano Devi is 32 years old. She lives in *Madanpur Khadar* and completed training in cutting/tailoring. At first she was apprehensive about finding employment. She secured a job after her training with *Modelma* Export house and is earning Rs. 1,800 per month. Earlier she could not manage her next meal in the day; her children loitered around dirty and hungry. She is grateful for this job which has allowed her to change not only her own life but also of those who are close to her. She says she never knew she was capable of all this. Her husband used to drink and beat her up, and now he respects her.

Lakshmi is 55 years old. She lives a block away from *Gyano Devi*. *Lakshmi* bore several hardships being ill-treated by her son-in-law, accused of being a burden. She led a neglected life in a *jhuggi* in *Madanpur Khadar*. She used to be a maid, a masseur and a cook and took up training in food preservation when *Prayatn* approached the women of her community. Soon after training, she set up a stall selling south Indian delicacies. She is earning Rs. 50 a day from the stall. She hopes to open her own shop soon. Meanwhile *Prayatn* has asked her to join the

Concern India Foundation programme to supply snacks to the elderly under the supplementary nutrition programme. With this job on her hands she earns a total of Rs. 70 in a day. Lakshmi wants to become self-reliant and salvage her self-respect. Now she does not feel lonely or abused.

Tulsi is 25 years old. She lives in *Madanpur Khadar*. She is self-employed and earns Rs. 3,000-4,000 a month by stitching garments for her community people and takes orders from Prayatn. She is happy she is able to supplement her family income and meet her children's needs better. She is very happy to earn but regrets that her husband does not allow her to go out to work, which she would like to do.

- ***Bartiya Parivardhan Sansthan***

Bartiya Parivardhan Sansthan has been working in the East district of Delhi since 1991. Its major activities include family planning counselling, awareness generation on HIV/AIDS and anti-smoking non-formal education, health and legal awareness. The organisation has organised *Stree Shakti* camp for education/health awareness activities in collaboration with the Delhi Govt. The organisation initiated its vocational training activities in the two trades of beauty culture and cutting/tailoring. 3,000 women were trained after training about 30 per cent began home-based income generation activities.

Under the vocational training programme which began in January 2003, 100 women have been trained and another 100 are under training in four trades- beauty culture, motor mechanic, cutting/tailoring and house keeping. The organisation provides standard training in cutting/tailoring. The trainees are eager to set up their own business, but are un-informed about registration procedures to form a partnership/company or where to apply for loans. However, the process of developing linkages is underway and constitutes an important part of the post-training activities. The area that these women live in is not feasible to set up shop as a majority of the households belong to the low income group. A few women are working for export houses as thread cutters, cloth checkers earning 2,000-3,000 rupees in a month. A majority of the trainees are working out of their homes, earning Rs. 45-80 in a day; not more than 3-500 rupees in a month. One woman has taken credit and set up her own shop and is earning 6-7,000 rupees a month. A few women from the community attended a model training workshop in ladies blouse construction at NVTI. Three-four women have formed a group and are conducting training classes along similar lines of their own training for adolescent girls from their community. A few women currently working out of home hope to set up shop in a better locality where they will get business.

Krishan is 40 years old, she lives in *Ashok Nagar*. She owns an auto repair shop. Having finished her training in motor mechanic from *Bhartiya Parivardhan Sansthan*, she started work after about a month and a half. There are 2-3 people working under her. Unable to find work with a workshop she decided to start her own shop. She averages about 6-7 thousand rupees in a month. However, she can not keep a good part of the earning as she has to repay her credit of Rs. 20,000. From her monthly earning she also has to pay her mechanics, Rs. 1000 as rent and other wear and tear at the shop. According to her, every woman can not open her own business, some do not have the money, and some are not permitted to pursue regular jobs by the family. She has two daughters and she hopes that they too can learn some skill and find work.

Rajni is 32, *Asha* is 27 and *Urnila* is 37 years old. All three of them have completed their cutting/tailoring skill development training at *Bhartiya Parivardhan Sans than*. These three also attended a one month model training programme at NVTI. These women aspire to become trainers and are teaching a few girls from their community in garment construction along similar lines that they received training on. They are of the view that learning a skill only increases ones knowledge and said their families were supportive of their efforts. They would like to register themselves as a partnership firm, and train more girls and give out certificates. Currently they possess five sewing. These women are eager to gather information regarding loans and registering themselves as a firm, the loan can help them buy more machines and expand their training centre.

Babli is 33 years old. She lives in a small village, the last village that separates Delhi from Uttar Pradesh on the East. She is educated up to the ninth standard, *Babli* completed her training in beauty culture and runs her own parlour from her house. She makes 70-80 rupees in a day. She would also like to move to a better locality where her customers will not be simply 4-5 in a day and she can put a lot more of her acquired skills to use than she does presently. She or her family has no problem with her going out to work but she feels its better to do her own work and as and when a loan can be facilitated she will continue to work from home.

Kamlesh is 37 and *Kanta* is 25 years old. These two women are working for a garments factory in *Gandhi Nagar*. They are involved with stitching garments for children, women and men. They are earning approximately Rs. 2,500-3,000 in a month. It was not possible to speak with these women, in order to do so, they would have had to take a day off from work, which usually results in a pay cut.

- **Prerana**

Prerana began in 1972 with an aim to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes designed for growth and development of the marginalized sections of the society. Over the years, the Organisation has been involved with population, health, reproductive health, education and capacity building measures. Under the vocational training programme, 80 women have been trained while 110 are still under training from the *Delhi-Badarpur* border area in three trades- dress designing, food preservation, household gadgets repairing, candle making, soft toy making are too be implemented. The trainees are semi-literate and the education levels are between tenth pass and below.

The area *Prerana* is working in is predominantly *Jat* or *Gujar* (two castes of northern India) populated. This commune restricts their women from moving outside the community. The

migrating residents tend to acquire this culture prevalent in the area and further restrict the mobility of the women from these areas. The primary constraint for the organisation was motivating these women to come out of their homes and acquire skills to better their position. Having achieved this, the organisation now faces an even greater challenge which is how to keep these women employed.

However, according to the Executive Director of *Prerana*, 50 per cent of the women from the dress designing trade have been employed with export houses earning Rs. 2,500-3,000 in a month. Another 20 have found work, which they do from home and earn Rs. 50 per piece they make. Another 3 women worked with the local home gadgets repairer; earning Rs. 30-50 per gadget.

Savita, works in a export house in *Okhla*, she migrated here from Orissa 10 years ago. She has three children and a husband who can not work. Therefore she must fetch for her family and take care of her children. *Savita* worked for one export house for 7 months after finishing her training, but was asked to leave. She found work elsewhere. However, the first export house provided her with a bonus and all employee benefits, while her latest employer requires her to dedicate 12 hours of her day. Given the work environment *Savita* is finding it a little difficult to accommodate jobs that require higher skill in spite of possessing skills. She says she has two certificates that state that she has learnt embroidery and is capable of handling the work however; she must be content with cutting thread and stitching portions of a garment every now and then.

Dulari on the other hand seems to have had better luck; she is training girls from her community and is presently earning more than her husband. She makes Rs. 3,000 in a month. *Dulari* assisted a local tailor after training and was advised by the programme facilitator of the area to start her own shop, she gave it a shot and work kept coming in. Her family gave her a piece of land to construct her own house from where she is running a training centre.

6. Government training facilities.

There are numerous government training facilities in both Delhi and Bangalore. However, these training institutes offer formal training courses. The enrolment criterion into any of these courses is to possess a formal literacy background (a maximum of above tenth passes and a minimum of eight pass). Placement procedures are to be developed. These formal training institutes offer structured and regular training in pre-defined areas. The seats for admissions to these institutes are also limited.

Under the Decent Employment for women pilot project initiated by the International Labour Organisation, the government training institutes are participating as implementing partners attempting to link formal vocational training with the informal sector. The main implementing partner is The Ministry of Labour. Particularly, the field institutions of the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T), Women's Training Directorate - The National Vocational

Training Institute in Delhi (NVTI) and the Regional Vocational Training Institute in Bangalore (RVTI) and two Industrial training Institutes (ITIs) in Delhi and Bangalore. And the V.V Giri National Labour Institute in Delhi.

These field institutions have been involved in the development of Vocational skills, training manuals and Entrepreneurial skills by the training officers – for entrepreneurial skills modules are being prepared in the area of micro enterprise development in the product and service based streams. The government institutes have facilitated utilisation of existing government infrastructure to link the informal sector with formal training. These institutes have aided the project with developing curriculums for different trades and in developing training infrastructure for partner NGOs. Master trainers from the ITIs have been trained, these master trainers in turn train the NGO trainers and if required even participate in the pilot project by conducting pilot courses and model training workshops. So far 39 master trainers from NVTI/RVTI, 8 trainers from ITI *Sirifort* and 29 trainers from partner NGOs have provided training/orientation in their areas of expertise. A variety of training resources have been used based on availability and requirements of different NGOs. This has included both private trainers such as beauticians as well as government facilities. 105 women beneficiaries have participated in pilot courses and model training workshops organised at NVTI and within the communities. 60 of these 105 women participated in model training programmes organised at NVTI. The workshop imparted market based, quality training which was adapted to the literacy and skill levels of these women in the five trades of *Henna* and make-up, hair styling, stitching ladies blouses, making of household utility items and soft toy making. 45 women have been trained in product development workshops in machine stitching skills and design/development of home accessories with paper. These were organised at the community level in collaboration with Prof. Kusum Chopra of the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).

- **The *Jijabai* Industrial Training Institute- (Delhi)**

The *Jijabai* Industrial Training Institute is located in Delhi. The ITI provides craftsmen level training. The level of training received is therefore semi-skilled. However, further advanced training can be continued at either NVTI or RVTI. The Institute offers professional training in fourteen different trades. The trainees must have an eight standard pass certificate to enrol here. Some courses in the IT/ Computer trades require a tenth or twelfth standard pass certificate with a Math and Science background.

- **The National Vocational Training Institute for Women- *Noida***

The National Vocational Training Institute for Women is a Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Directorate General of Employment and Training initiative. NVTI imparts advanced

training, training for instructors and is involved with development of entrepreneurial skills. NVTI offers structured regular training courses in areas possessing high employability. A database centre and an audio visual lab are being developed at the NVTI to prepare gender specific information base on vocational training and to develop audio-visual packages for enhancing the learning process of the women beneficiaries. These can be used as information sources by NGOs and other organisations working in the informal sector.

- **Regional vocational training Institute (Bangalore)**

The RVTI in Bangalore is a field institution of the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE&T). The institute provides formal and structured training in pre-defined areas. The institute develops training curriculums and training packages for partner NGOs. The RVTI has developed a syllabus for screen-printing. It is also able to provide short-term training in such skills as soft toy making. Training officers from the RVTI have developed training manuals on various trades related to electronic such as PCB soldering and wiring, transformer winding, screen printing, masonry etc.

- **V. V. Giri National Labour Institute (Delhi)**

The V. V. *Giri* National Labour Institute is located in *Noida*. The Institute has recently established a resource centre for Gender and Labour. The Centre has been set up with a view to promote research pertaining to various gender issues in labour. One of the two on- going projects at the Centre is Decent Employment for Women. The centre serves as a point of collection and dissemination of information on women worker's rights and soft skills such as gender issues, legal literacy and health. The soft skill development is carried out through the preparation of Training manuals. Three training manuals have been developed by the Institute based on a series of skill and need assessment workshops and training manuals drafted by the VVG NLI, on Occupational Safety and Health, Legislative Protection for Women Workers and Understanding Gender Inequality. Each of these manuals has been developed in a question exercise format with guidelines and methodology. The methodology proposes the use of case studies, role plays, group discussions, and presentations. The manual contains a series of sample role plays and case studies. The manuals are to be translated in to different regional languages; so far translations in *Hindi* and *Kanada* have been decided on.

7. Lessons learnt and recommendations.

A. Positive lessons learnt

Flexibility and relevance in design and strategy

A major challenge of this project has been to devise a suitable model that is both flexible and appropriate to the ground realities. The aim has been to address a felt need and fill a gap that remains under sourced, despite various governmental and non-governmental efforts. While training facilities are many they do not cater to the needs of uneducated older people, and older women in particular, who are unable to access them because of personal or domestic limitations. That it is possible to address these needs in an effective manner is the first learning outcome of this pilot project. The general experience of partner NGOs has been that the project has enabled them to provide a real source of empowerment to poor women in the slums. The women participants themselves have been uniformly both enthused and satisfied with the training both in terms of raising their awareness and skills as well as in helping them experience a development of their own potential. For some this has been an opportunity to come out of their homes despite familial resistance, for others this has meant greater confidence and bargaining power in the market as in the case of domestic workers. Group saving schemes - the formation of self help groups followed by all partner NGOs, has been a major support both in terms of helping women come together collectively as well to serve as a nucleus for joint activities.

One of the areas that has also been focused on while designing and implementing this project is that of looking at non traditional areas as well developing suitable and usable training models and syllabi that can be replicated. Electrical wiring, electronics components, assembling transformers and masonry are some of these. For some partner NGOs there is already a base of experience, which they have been able to build on, while for others it has been a learning experience. In every case there is a positive feeling from partners in relation to the design and application of this project. They feel it has addressed a real need and the experience has been positive. For some the concept itself has been inspiring, while for others the implementation has thrown up many issues for consideration, which they feel can be applied in refining and building on the pilot.

Holistic approach

In terms of the outcomes for the participants, in all cases they have benefited from the training experience both as training per se as well as in terms of an enhanced world view. The addition of life skills to the technical training programme has been a positive feature since it has addressed women's needs holistically rather than in a separate or divisive manner which has often been a

stumbling block in many livelihood and income generation programmes. This is also evident in the support systems that have been provided whether it is child care or counseling and a major part of the effort of partner NGOs has been to empower women to meet the various obstacles that they have faced while deciding to participate in this training as well as in continuing to attend it. While this may not appear to be a major input, in practice it takes time and resources to change attitudes and address day-to-day practical and logistical problems. Another important learning is that the preparation process is as important as the actual training and the follow up. The close links between partner NGOs and the communities they work with is a major strength of the programme. In some cases the pilot project has created new bonds.

Direct and indirect benefits

This is perhaps the most difficult area the pilot has had to address since ensuring that women are able to benefit from the training is the single most important indicator of its usefulness and effectiveness. In many cases there have been spin off effects in terms of changing the position and situation of women in their families and in the community at large. Even where the desire of women to undertake this training programme has raised disturbance in the domestic set up, it has still had a positive effect. In some cases the women have become role models in their communities and others have been encouraged to come forward to ask for training. There has been a ripple effect in the community at large. This has mixed consequences since it may not be entirely feasible to meet the expectations raised among others. In the case of the participants themselves many have found employment and although their earnings may not still be enough to meet all their needs it has resulted in supplementary income and betterment in livelihood. In some cases it has meant positive relief from distress, especially in the case of women headed households. It is not possible to quantify all the benefits within the scope of this study but women have reported earnings of Rs.1000- 2,000 monthly. In some cases there has been an increase in earnings but for many it is a net increase since they have not worked before either due to domestic pressures or because of limited opportunities.

The training itself has given some women the confidence to feel that they will be able to apply it despite the difficulties they are facing as in the case of those who have learnt taxi driving and now find that the market opportunities have changed. When asked why they opted to learn taxi driving many express their desire to prove they too can succeed in a male dominated field. The potential earnings, which are higher than in the case of trades such as domestic housekeeping, also motivate them. For those who have learnt grinding ophthalmic lenses the women expressed a keen desire to support their parents and sort out the financial difficulties faced by their families-

they opted for this trade keeping in mind the potential to find appropriate jobs in the local market and the higher potential of earning.

Follow up and support

Counseling and placement has been a major area of thrust. It is here that the maximum amount of effort has gone in and is still likely to go in since this is the most important issue. The effectiveness depends on many factors but it is not necessarily an activity that can be completed on a one off basis. The results have been satisfactory so far with some exceptions. Some of the unanticipated problems come from the women's requirements and constraints themselves. Most would prefer work close to their homes but this is not always possible, so even when there is opportunity there may still be limited access because of their unwillingness to travel far or not being allowed to travel outside their community. One of the solutions being applied to deal with this kind of problem is additional training. Thus, for instance, some of the women who have been trained in domestic housekeeping are now being trained in commercial housekeeping since the areas they live in are largely non residential. Another kind of problem is the likelihood that husbands or other family members may continue to give them trouble. This is however being largely addressed by concerted inputs and support from community workers.

B. Negative

Problems and Prospects of Skill Development

Through this project skill and capacity development and more importantly empowerment of poor women has been encouraged and achieved. However, it needs to be highlighted that the contexts in which these efforts have evolved differ between the two cities of Delhi and Bangalore. While non-traditional trades have been initiated into the training programme in both the cities, a majority of the women in Delhi have opted for employment in traditional trades such as textile/garment construction and embroidery. After her training in assembling transformers *Humaira* was involved with separating two different types of stencils used in making transformers, she was earning Rs. 1,200 per month. She continued this work for about two months. Currently, *Humaira* is earning Rs. 1,000-1,500 per month from home, for cutting thread from embroidered pieces of cloth. Similarly, while women have found work in export houses earning 2,000-3,000 rupees a month, these women are working as assistants or thread cutters, having received training in garment construction and embroidery. What needs to be addressed here is this transfer from skilled to low skilled labour even after skill development and capacity building.

Another area which needs further attention is the selection and contribution of trainers to the training programme. An added difficulty had been finding suitable trainers and in the case of commercial housekeeping for instance developing a suitable training syllabus during the course of the training. What needs to be considered very closely by the NGOs hiring trainers for the training programme is that these trainers must excel at the skills they propose to impart and must also possess the ability to transfer the learning in a systematic and efficient manner.

The socio-cultural environment of an area is responsible to a considerable extent in influencing the post training period. This determines whether women are able to find employment and keep it or remain unemployed. A few women from the *Meethapur* community (Delhi), express an instinctive reluctance towards stepping out to find work, they seem to be disinclined and helpless because they have no other choice but to obey their husbands who refuse to let them outside the community; this is causing a progression towards de-skilling which is in contradiction with the aim of the project, methods of intervention or provisions must be developed to manage such a situation.

Sensitisation and Training of husbands/fathers/brothers is crucial for the long-term success of the training programme. The NGOs could put into operation the identification of capable and interested partners of the trainees to build a sustainable support for the woman after training. This would require continuous and interactive training and sensitisation of the partner towards the needs and aspirations of the woman trainee.

In all cases Self Help Groups and saving schemes have been encouraged alongside this development of group savings formation of integrated packages of supports and resources should be made available to provide the women with self-directedness to help them create better jobs for themselves and others. Women self help groups have the potential to grow into cooperatives. Through them sustainability can be enhanced, as women can learn about micro credit and small business skills and further utilise them to their benefit.

C. Recommendations

Selection of skills and trades and availability of employment

While many of the skills and trades selected have proved viable, a few non-traditional ones have proved difficult because of factors beyond control. Skills such as taxi driving, horticulture driving, machine knitting and transformer assembly, repairing household gadgets may require additional inputs which are currently being worked on by the partner NGOs implementing the project. Some of these have been anticipated in terms of breaking through gender barriers which requires attitudinal change, while others have been part of changing market conditions. There

have been suggestions from partners in terms of additional skill sets and trades and innovative models of providing training that could prove viable and it would be worthwhile exploring these in the future. Another strategy could involve training women in more than one skill/trade as being practiced by some partner NGOs. This would give them greater choices and increase their security by increasing their employment potential. Further to this would be to consider periodic skill up gradation where this is feasible and requested by women.

The potential benefits of different skills/trades depend largely on the availability of employment opportunities and market demand. The earning potential varies depending upon the market. In the case of non traditional skills/trades such as electrical wiring, making of electronic components, masonry, plumbing and taxi driving, assembling transformers, grinding ophthalmic lenses on the one hand the market potential is greater than for more traditional skills such as tailoring, but on the other, there is a greater effort and risk involved to gain acceptance and break through barriers. In the case of masonry and grinding ophthalmic lenses for example there are major barriers, but any movement for change does require persistence and a concerted effort on many fronts. The selection of skills and trades has been undertaken very carefully, with a view to both women's needs and interests, as well the potential avenues for employment for sale as the case may be. Despite that there is no doubt that there have been unforeseen factors coming up such as changes in the market itself or unanticipated barriers. On the whole however, there is both a will to ensure placement and follow up support as well as positive results in many cases. Since many of the skills/trades are not likely to result in secure employment there will always be some requirement for follow up support. This is probably the most important area of focus. As comprehensive as any market analysis can be there is still a learning that can come only through the experience gained through such a pilot as this.

Market linkages

In some cases markets are fairly stable and there is a level of continuous demand such as in the case of domestic housekeeping. In other cases while demand exist it is more difficult to place poor women because they are not the first choice such as women working in export or garment houses. It is in this area that the maximum effort is required to build linkages to ensure that placements take place and this may not be a one time activity since employers/buyers, as well as products and demand can change. In several cases there have been linkages built with businesses as well with government organisations and the potential for exploring these further is essential (Please see **appendix 1**). In Bangalore, KKNSS is forming linkages with organisations such as *Rajiv Gandhi* Housing Construction Ltd, AVAS and *Nirmithi Kendra* which are engaged in government construction projects, have assisted in providing trainees with apprenticeship

opportunities and KKNSS is exploring scope to build further linkages with such organisations for employment opportunities. Another NGO *Parinati* with the help of its partner ILO has benefited from its linkage with the Coconut Board. The board has decided to provide marketing assistance apart from the training and that commercial housekeeping services can be offered to the various commercial enterprises burgeoning in adjacent areas.

In Delhi, NGOs like *Streebal* besides generating employment opportunities at its own production centre employing a majority of its beneficiaries has networked well with the export houses, other NGOs and local department stores to create work. The Organisation has established linkages with *Khadi Gram Udyog*, the Cottage Industries Emporium, Life Style(export house), Balloons (Export house) for its garments/linen products. Three women were employed at Balloons soon after their training. One was forced to discontinue given her family problems, the second moved to a better job with another export house and the third is still with Balloons, she joined as a garment checker for a monthly salary of Rs. 2000. With the help of its partner ILO and government agencies *Disha* has also recently obtained a licence for manufacture of surgical bandages keeping in mind this need of the RMPs. As a result a batch of 20 women that trained in manufacture of surgical bandages has found employment. At *JSS-Prayas*, for instance, to market biscuits the organisation tried to develop the marketing skills of the SHG members. 10 packets of biscuits were given to each SHG, if sold Rs. 5 from each packet would be deposited in their collective savings. Procedures to develop linkages are underway with *NABARD/Rashtriya Mahila Kosh* to facilitate financial support to the beneficiaries. Once the organisation obtains a vehicle, linkages have been developed with driving schools for training and maintenance and post training activities.

Most partners are in the process of establishing linkages with adequate support from ILO and it would be useful to consider the possibility of their seeking assistance from business forums or organisations such as Rotary as well as from women business leaders. Coordinating this process might be useful so that there can be multiple benefits. Since in many cases it is also business skills that are required organisations providing advice, support and training in entrepreneurial skills such as *AWAKE* may also prove useful. It is also possible to encourage the individual to assess her own performance and be more responsible and self-directed while making use of her knowledge to adapt to new changes and locate better opportunities.

Placement/Handholding

Apart from the will to pursue different avenues of providing employment to the women who have been trained, there is also a resource need to support this and the development of placement

facilities and services. This is already being done by many partners and would certainly need to be built up further beyond a pilot stage to ensure the effectiveness of the training. In some cases such as cutting/tailoring it is possible to directly place women in jobs through placement efforts with the export/garment houses. Since these are private companies, competency based training can be further developed to meet the demands of such companies. In some cases such as the women masons placement is also a matter of involving government and other agencies in changing policies that are preventing women from accessing equal opportunities. This is an additional dimension since it involves advocacy and not merely building market linkages or support services for women. The viability of the project falls or stands on this crucial element of placement since without this the training alone will not suffice. In any scaling up of this project this is an area that will need to be strengthened, building on the base that already exist and the knowledge gained while implementing this pilot. Since this is a pilot it has taken some effort to both persuade the women to take on the training in the face of resistance from within their households as well as the uncertainty they feel about venturing into what is the “unknown” for them. However they themselves have chosen the area of training and there have been few dropouts. Handholding has emerged as a crucial factor which needs constant efforts on the part of NGOs in order to allow women to train as skilled workers and subsequently find employment and enable themselves to keep it. A strategy currently being considered at KKNSS in Bangalore is whether the women should be given additional training and the number increased, while at the same time addressing the problems being faced at the placement level. 3 of the 50 women have found work on their own, while the Slum Board has mentioned several vacancies where they could be placed. Others have been able to get sporadic work. For KKNSS this is a part of a struggle they face in many facets of their work as a movement for people’s rights.

Coordination and networking

Some amount of this has taken place between partner NGOs facilitated by ILO, as well as on an informal basis. For instance the government training institutes that function as implementing partners have conducted need assessment workshops and model training workshops to further aid the development of the training programme. Based on their competencies some partners have been able to implement the facilitation well, while others seem to have missed out on the opportunities. Therefore, there is an expressed need as well as an inherent requirement to create a more formal process and forum for interaction between those involved in this project or even in similar areas of work. This would lead to greater learning and exchange of ideas as well possibilities for sharing resources such as trainers or training syllabi and even cooperative

training activities or joint placement services. While doing this together it would still be possible to retain the individuality and special expertise of each partner since this is a vital part of the learning process.

Upscaling and sustainability

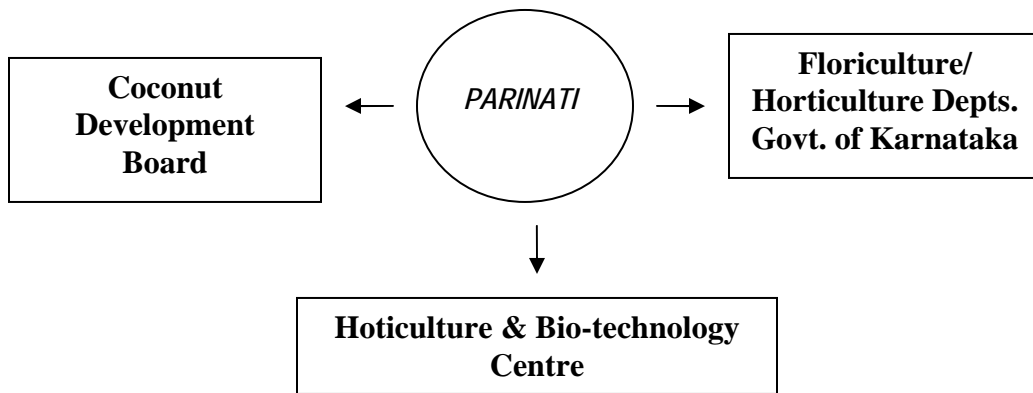
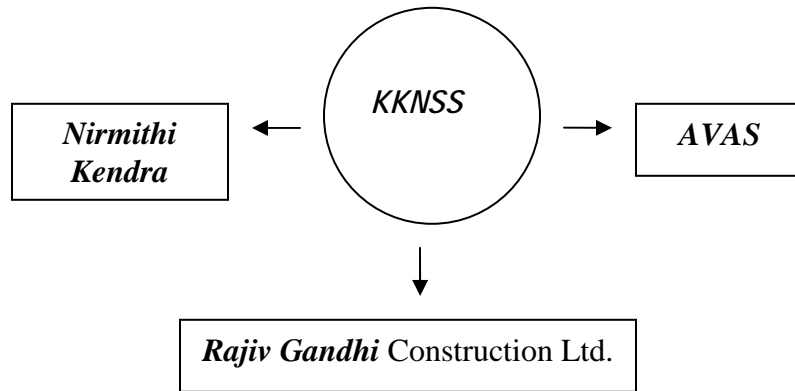
There is every reason to believe that the present pilot can be scaled up and improved by incorporating the learnings during implementation. There would also be further areas that would require some study in terms of understanding the market better and developing strategies for building linkages as well as placement services. These would be vital for taking the project beyond its present scope and it would be useful to associate business leaders, government and other influential people in the process.

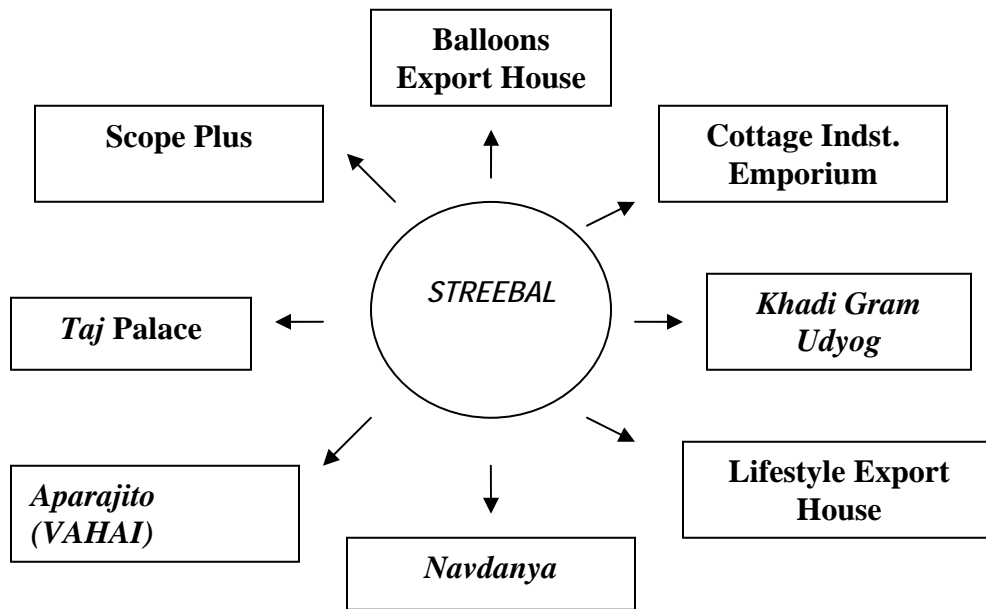
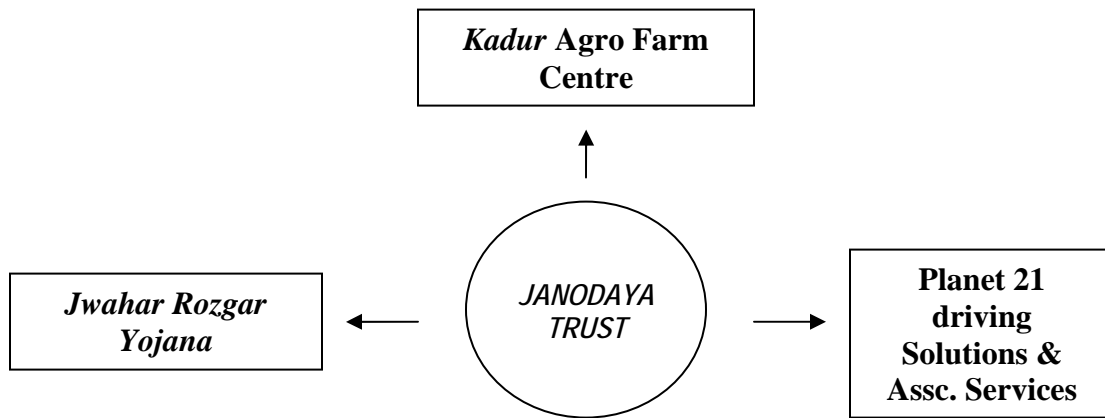
Another area that requires re-focusing is the training duration, it appears to be insufficient to help develop the skill to its fullest potential, and lacks any kind of certification measures which can be coupled with after training measures to aid the employment seeking process.

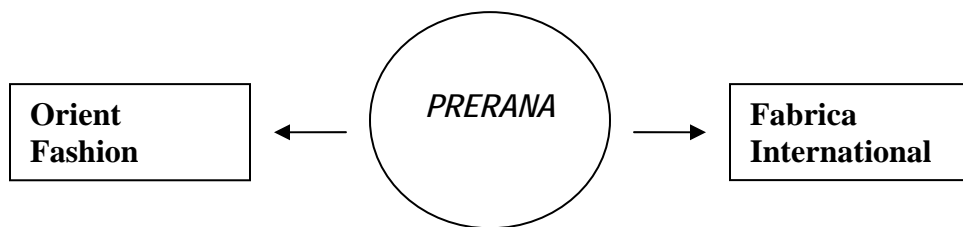
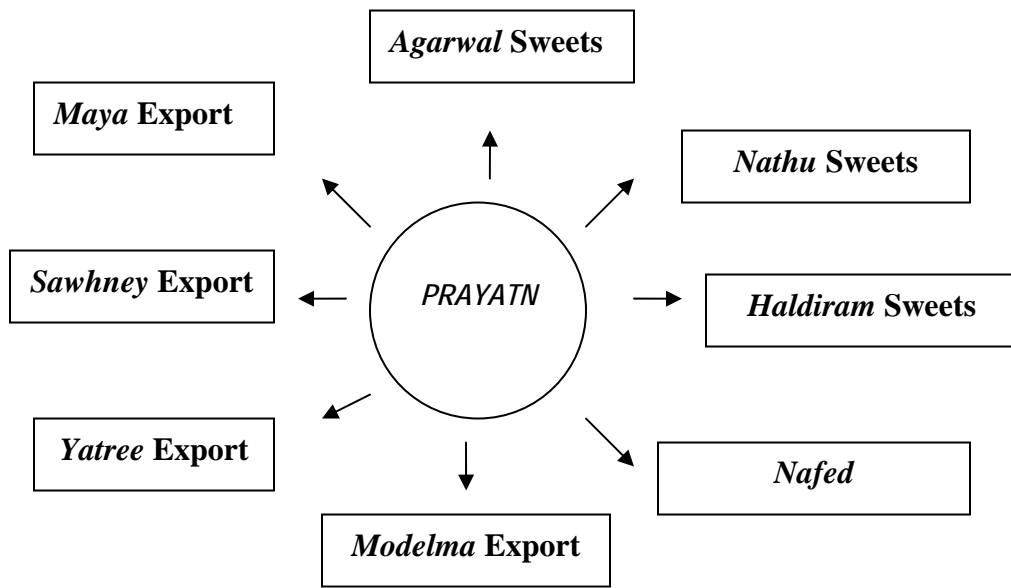
In terms of the success of the pilot project there is no doubt that it has proved effective keeping in mind that failures are also a part of the learning process. In any case success in an area like this is relative and the best indicator is what women participants have to say themselves. There are women still undergoing training who are concerned that they may not find a job. But this must be viewed against the confidence of women who are facing obstacles but have not given up. This is a process of empowerment in itself.

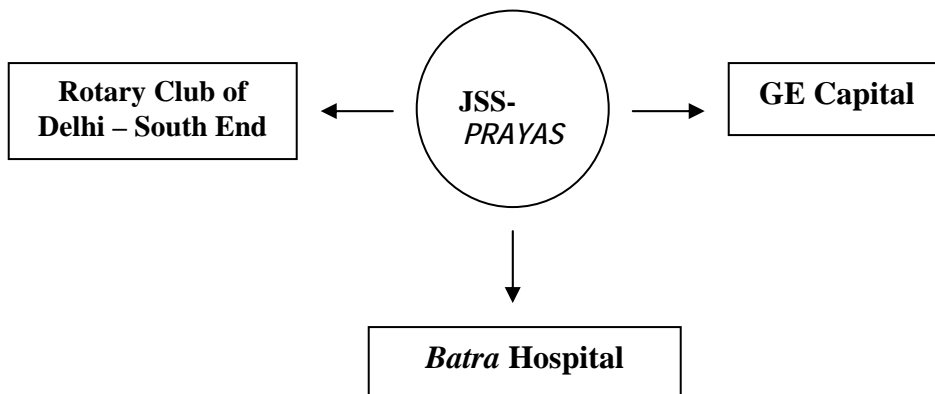
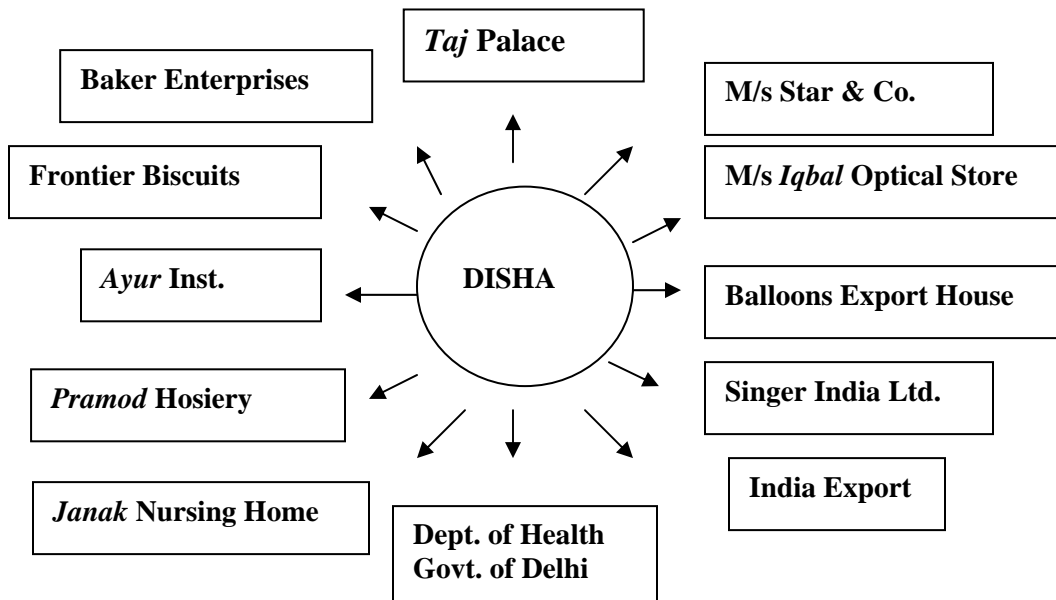
Appendix 1

Market linkages – A graphic Representation









List of NGOs visited

Delhi

1. **STREEBAL**
Mrs.Rami Chhabra
President
2. **PRERANA**
Mrs.Vinita Natha
Executive Director
3. **PRAYATN**
Mrs.Renu Chopra
Managing Trustee
4. **DISHA**
Mrs.Shobhana Radhakrishna
Chief Executive
5. **Bhartiya Parivardhan Sanstha**
Mr.S. Pathak
President
6. **Jan Shikshan Sansthan Prayas**
Mr. Vivek Upadhya
Director

Bangalore

1. **Janodaya Public Trust,**
Ms. Santosh Vas,
Chairlady
2. **Service Society**
(Karnataka Kolageri Nivasigala Samyukta Sanghatane-KKNSS)
Mr. N P Samy, Central Co-ordinator /
Mr. Madhu Sudan, Secretary
3. **The Association of People with Disability (APD),**
Mr.V.S.Basavaraj
4. ***Goodwill International Association***
Mr.Alphonse.J
General Secretary
5. **PARINATI**
Mr.Joseph Panackel
Chief Executive

Documents consulted

- ♦ Completion reports submitted by partner NGOs
- ♦ Evaluation report of Lady Irwin College, New Delhi
- ♦ Library of the National Institute of Urban Affairs: various documents
- ♦ Project pamphlets
- ♦ www.ilo.org for project information

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- ♦ Chen, Martha Alten. 2003. 'Rethinking the informal economy' in Footloose Labour (November 2003), Seminar 531.
- ♦ Dhar Chakrabarti, P.G. 2001. 'Delhi's on-going debate on informal settlements and work places – issues of environmental jurisprudence', paper presented at international workshop on Coping with Informality and Illegality in Human Settlements in Developing Cities, 23-26 May 2001.
- ♦ Economic Survey of Delhi 2001-02
- ♦ Mitra, Arup. 2003. 'Occupational Choices, Networks and Transfers: an exegesis based on micro data from Delhi slums'. New Delhi: Manohar Publishers.
- ♦ Population Census 2001
- ♦ Ramachandran, H and SV Subramanian. 2001. 'Slum Household Characteristics in Bangalore: a comparative analysis (1973 and 1992), in Hans Schenk (ed) Living in India's Slums: a case Study of Bangalore. IDPAD. New Delhi: Manohar.