



Economic Rehabilitation

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Introduction:

Culturally, Indian women do not enjoy equal rights as men despite the Constitutional guarantee on equality. World Bank studies showed that only 33 percent of the labor force in 2014 were women. Yet, the World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap Report finds a positive correlation between gender equality and per capita GDP, the level of competitiveness, and human development indicators. Additionally, studies have indicated that financially-empowered women can greatly contribute to the well-being of her family. In the Hemophilia community in India, most of the caregivers are women. They are either mothers or wives of persons with hemophilia/other bleeding disorders (PwH/BD). Given their dedication in taking care of their PwH/BD family members, Hemophilia Federation India implemented an economic rehabilitation program for women in selected chapters, distributing a total of 20 sewing machines. The objective was to provide women beneficiaries with opportunities to earn while staying at home to take care of their PwH/BD family member.

Materials and Methods: Through funds donated to the HFI, two chapters (including my chapter) initially started the economic rehabilitation program. Three other chapters followed, benefitting a total of 10 women.

Results: The women started tailoring business. From an average income of zero to Rs.15,000/month, women started to gain increasing income. Today, the beneficiary women earn an average of between Rs.20,000 to Rs.30,000 per month, enabling them to contribute to their family income while working from home. The project also led to the establishment of community partnerships where Chapter President, in the case of my Chapter (Ahmedabad), contacted a local businessman to provide additional sewing machine. Likewise, the businessman paved the way for one beneficiary to become a bulk contractor of uniforms.

Conclusion: On top of enabling the women to gain financial independence, the project became a fruitful way of empowering the beneficiaries. Likewise, it became a platform for the women to help their respective families ease the financial burden resulting from perennial bleeds because of hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. Hemophilia Federation India should continue the economic rehabilitation program and provide additional funding to benefit more women across the country.

