

SHACKLES ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN

Young women, especially in rural areas, are impeded by socio-cultural and other norms, in realizing their potential to work for India. Asiya's career graph is proof of how DET is helping break entrenched barriers and giving women the opportunities they deserve.

Opportunities are scarce in Dandeli and educated youth like Asiya, struggle to find gainful employment.

"We are a family of six and our monthly income is Rs 10,000" says Asiya, an MSW graduate. "Yes, it is quite difficult." Hailing from the small town of Dandeli in North Karnataka, Asiya's family survives on the income from their printing press. Opportunities are scarce in Dandeli and educated youth like Asiya, struggle to find gainful employment.

A World Bank study shockingly reveals that, as of 2012, only 27% of Indian women are part of the workforce, the second lowest in Asia.¹ Struggling against socio-cultural norms that restrict them from working and nudge them towards early marriages and childbearing, young women from the BOP in India face a tough journey towards employment.

As the youngest of four siblings with an ailing father, Asiya was tasked with all household responsibilities. After completing her degree surmounting these challenges, Asiya got a job in a nearby town. Faced with the familiar dilemma of taking up a job she didn't like since her family needed the money, she was still trying to make up her mind when she learnt about DET's HR Fellowship. Intrigued by HR, Asiya decided to join.

The joy of continuous improvement

Residential skill development programs for young women, such as those offered at DET, should not be viewed as isolated interventions targeting skill building. The model is especially effective as it enables a young woman to step away from the social and cultural obligations that bind her and allows her to focus on her personal and professional development.

¹) Buisness Standard

"Graduates from Deshpande Educational Trust are punctual and self-motivated. They are highly disciplined and we do not have to spend too much time and money on training them as they already have sufficient practical knowledge from their course."

Ravi Kumar Havaragi, HR Executive, Amazon Distributors Pvt. Ltd.

WHAT WORKED FOR ASIYA

- Kaizen model
- Management tools
- Leadership skills
- Teamwork



ASIYA SHAIKH | Deshpande Human Resource Management Program, Alumna, 2016

DET is a wonderful place to discover yourself if you work hard.

As in other DET programs, technical HR-related tools such as Excel, compensation scales, payroll creation and leave tracking were combined with soft skills such as leadership, team work, building confidence and improving communication. A particularly sharp memory for Asiya is that of being taught the Kaizen model which emphasizes continuous improvement. "The idea that we should keep working on ourselves and our organizations to make them better was something that I learnt at DET," she recalls.

Several skills get inculcated at DET, not just through classroom instruction but through daily experiences, facilitating greater personal transformation among the students. "I learnt how to work in a team, how to mingle with people from different backgrounds and how to actually listen to people. This was not through my textbooks, but from all the activities and interactions I had with classmates and teachers," says Asiya. The supporting learning environment enabled women to feel more secure and approach teachers as confidantes, sharing their feelings and problems, at all times of the day. Counseling and motivational coaching by trainers help the personal development of these women, emphasizing the holistic value of DET.

Paying it forward

"I was recruited by DF on graduation," says Asiya happily.

Her responsibilities include outreach and campaigning across various rural and urban locations, to enable more students like her to join India's workforce equipped with the right skills and competencies. From delivering presentations on DET to personal counseling sessions with prospective students, Asiya's job is as demanding as it is exciting. "I really enjoy what I do. I am working in HR – something I could never have imagined given my lack of skills and a formal HR degree. And I am making a difference in the lives of so many people."

Big dreams are brewing in Asiya's mind already. Inspired by the change she sees in students who join DET, her long-term goal is to set up an NGO in her town. "I want to create the same opportunities I got at DET for other youth in Dandeli."

Asiya's confidence and determination shines through the interview. It's clear to see that she has come a long way from where she first started. Her journey is only one amongst thousands of women who have gone through the same life-changing experiences at DET and gone on to scale the number of women productively contributing to India's development. Interventions like these are the essential catalysts that enable young women to shake off socio-cultural shackles and step confidently into the nation's workforce.

STUDENT PROFILE AND IMPACT POST-DET

Educational qualification	MSW
First generation learner	No
Pre-DET monthly household income	Rs. 10,000
Sector of employment	Human Resources
Hailing from	Dandeli
Working in	Hubballi

Salary Increment (INR):

