



## THERE'S ALWAYS A LIGHT AHEAD

Where can a young woman with three children, fending for herself, find a way to acquire skills and get a job? DET's approach of creating a positive and warm environment for all, demonstrates how the course is inclusive at the core.

*"I am used to handling responsibilities. I've been doing it all my life."*

"I've lived through a lot of pain," says Radha. "I think that has made me quite strong." Hailing from a tiny village in Karnataka, Radha's family comprises of her mother and three children. After her father passed away, her mother struggled to make ends meet but sent Radha to school, determined that she should complete the 12th grade without having to drop out to work and earn.

A shadow passes over Radha's face as she talks about her life after school. "I was married when I was 18, right after I had passed 12th grade," she recalls. "I don't think I was ready. But then in my village, no one really asks a girl if she is ready to get married." Life got tougher years later, when her husband passed away as well, leaving her to fend for herself and their three young children. "I am used to handling responsibilities. I've been doing it all my life," she says calmly.

Women face complex realities when it comes to gaining skills and participating in the workforce – low levels of literacy, discriminatory social customs and traditions, limited hours available for training and work, and limited exposure to new technology.<sup>1)</sup> Radha was no exception. DET's approach has involved deep sensitivity to the struggles students undergo. Through scholarships, counseling and support structures, DET aims to create a warm and positive environment where such disadvantaged students can look ahead.





### The DET Value: Stepping away from the familiar

"I was a married woman with three children. It had been years since I had stepped into an educational institution," Radha recalls, laughing as she remembers her nervousness on her first day at the DSF program. Thanks to the efforts of her teachers and classmates, Radha was soon able to

*"As a single mother to three children, my daughter had faced a lot of hardships in her life. She decided to join Deshpande Foundation after completing her course from there. I wanted to know how she was managing all by herself and I visited her office in Hubballi. I met her boss who was really appreciating my daughter's work ethics and professionalism. I am very proud of how my daughter has become such a positive and confident person!"*

- Radha's mother

### WHAT WORKED FOR RADHA

-  • Spoken English
-  • Computing skills
-  • Positive thinking
-  • Problem-solving ability

1) Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2012

**RADHA HULIKATTI** | Deshpande Susandhi Fellowship Program (Frontline Management), Alumna, 2013



DET teaches people to not worry about what happened in life before but to **focus** on **moving forward confidently.**

settle in and start learning. She was immediately struck by one key aspect. Every trainer repeatedly reinforced the need to have a positive outlook in life. With a lifetime of negative experiences behind her, this was the first transformative idea Radha experienced at DET.

DET's pedagogical framework takes into account the multiple needs of students from the BOP, whether it is technical skills, exposure, or confidence. In Radha's case, as in the case of most young women, exposure was a critical input. "I went straight from my house to my husband's house. I was never in touch with what was happening in the outside world," she remembers.

At DET, Radha's horizons broadened as she met people from all over the world – both within her campus and outside. Radha recalls visits that the class made to nearby villages, where they were encouraged to speak to inhabitants and discuss their challenges and possible solutions. Combined with various guest lectures by experts from across the globe, she began to build her awareness on social issues and improve her ability to

think independently.

### Productive Careers: Embracing happiness

On graduating, Radha was recruited as a trainee by DET. Employed with DET over the past five years, she has now been promoted to Program Associate with a much higher salary, and has been tasked with the responsibility of managing a team that verifies eligibility of students for admission. "Sometimes I don't recognize myself now. Everyone says I am full of energy. They can't believe I have three children," she says, laughing.

Her learnings from the DSF course continue to be useful. She is proud of her sense of discipline and strong positive outlook. DET's impact percolates down to her children as well as she ensures that they too build these skills and attitudes. Proud of how far she has come, her goals as a mother have changed from merely ensuring her family survives to now being determined that her children end up more qualified than her. The seeds of change have already been sown for the next generation, and, as Radha says, it all began with a few months at DET.

### STUDENT PROFILE AND IMPACT POST-DET

Educational qualification	12th Grade
First generation learner	Yes
Pre-DET monthly household income	Rs. 3,500
Sector of employment	Human Resource
Hailing from	Indoor
Working in	Hubballi

Salary Increment (INR):

